

CONSTRUCTING INDIGENOUS ETHNICITIES AND CLAIMING LAND RIGHTS IN THE
LOWER TAPAJÓS AND ARAPIUNS REGION, BRAZILIAN AMAZON

By

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In memory of my brother Álvaro Félix, who inspired me and encouraged me to persist in this attempt

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My study examined the sense of ethnic identity of the Arapium and Jaraqui Indians of the lower Arapiuns River region, Brazilian Amazon. The study analyzed the conceptual and political dilemmas associated with the claims of indigenous identity and land rights among people of mixed descent. Focusing on the case of the indigenous movement led by the Tapajós-Arapiuns Indigenous Council (CITA), this dissertation presents analysis of the material and symbolic means through which the meaning of being Arapium and Jaraqui Indians is constructed. Supported by historical, constructionist, and place perspectives, I explored the historical events that led to the idea of disappearance of Arapium Indians, the regional contemporary socio-political dynamics that contributed to the formation of the indigenous movement, and the intertwining of local and global discourses of conservation and economic development, in which the claims for recognition took place.

Since 1997, different communities along the lower Tapajós River have become involved in political struggle for their rights as indigenous peoples. The movement spread throughout the region and motivated twelve different ethnic groups to claim their rights over their ancestral lands. In the municipality of Santarém along the Arapiuns River, the Arapium and Jaraqui

Indians of the indigenous territory known as Cobra Grande decided to join the indigenous movement and claim the demarcation of their lands. Through a double process of indigenous identity formation, the Arapium Indians re-constructed their identity and the Jaraqui created a new one.

The analysis is based on 14 months of fieldwork and a combination of oral histories, semi-structured interviews, focus group analysis, and archival research methods. The study suggests that the indigenous movement constitutes a political expression embedded with memories, history, and territorial meanings that mobilizes people through collective action. The construction of identity is an active and interactive process through which the individuals build new ways of interpreting themselves. Indigenous identity is not just the product of the present socio-political struggle; it is founded in the historical personal and collective memories that have enabled the Arapium and Jaraqui people to self-ascribe to the Indian category. In terms of the legal definition of land rights, decisions need to go beyond consideration of the extension of land necessary for the reproduction of indigenous cultures. Decision need to consider that indigenous territories are also the product of processes of identity construction. The different threats experienced by indigenous peoples have propitiated the creation and re-creation of their territories. The arguments that support the claims for recognition are based on both political and moral discourses.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

A Journey through the Problem

This study is concerned with construction of ethnic indigenous identity. I examine why and how people self-identify with a specific ethnicity and what the means are to construct the meanings of this identity. I explore as well, the practices, the happiness, suffering, and contradictions that emerge from this process. The study focuses on the conceptual and political dilemmas associated with the claims of indigenous identity among people of mixed descent. In particular, I examine the movement for recognition of indigenous status and land tenure rights of culturally mixed groups of the Brazilian lower Amazon region, in the municipality of Santarém, Pará. I have defined culturally mixed groups as those who have lost certain fundamental characteristics, such as language, religious beliefs, and traditional social structures that distinguish them as indigenous people. Since 1997, culturally mixed groups of this region have become involved in a political struggle for the claim of their rights as indigenous people.

Questions regarding the self-definition as indigenous people by culturally mixed populations are based on considerations of what constitutes indigeness. Features such as ancestral continuity, aboriginal occupation of land prior to foreign invasion, use of indigenous language, and practices of socio-cultural traditions are considered essential markers for the recognition of the authenticity for those defined as indigenous people (Eriksen 2002). This has become challenging in the case of culturally mixed groups, who, due to processes of forced assimilation, have lost many features of their traditional culture, making the legal recognition of indigenous status and related rights problematic (Santos and Oliveira 2003). This is even more complex in the case focus of this study given that the self-adoption of Indian identity is held by culturally mixed populations in areas where indigenous groups are considered extinct or

assimilated due to colonization, slavery, intermarriage, and forced acculturation (Moreira 1988; Nugent 1993; Parker 1985; Ross 1978; Wagley 1976). To illustrate the complexity of this case, I present in the next section the variety of issues that come into view regarding considerations of indigenous identity claims.

Engaging with the Subject

In June 2004, when I went to Santarém, Brazil for the first time to meet the members of the indigenous organizations CITA (*Conselho Indígena Tapajós-Arapiuns*) and GCI (*Grupo Conciencia Indígena*), I witnessed several scenes that demonstrated how varied and intricate are the issues embraced in the contemporary claiming of ethnic indigenous identity. The same week I arrived, they invited me to a meeting in *Lago da Praia*, one of the communities along the Arapiuns River where later I did my research. There, indigenous groups from the area were discussing concerns about land demarcation with governmental representatives and neighboring non-indigenous communities. While discussing advances on land demarcation, a woman from one of the neighboring communities, who emphasized not being an Indian, said that since she has been living in the area, 67 years ago, she never knew about the existence of “*índios*,”¹ but suddenly everybody has become indigenous, including her own family. She finished saying that as far as she remembers, only “people” but not “*índios*” have inhabited that land.

Reactions to this statement did not take long, and a young man with his body painted with marks similar to those of a cobra snake took his chance to speak. He said in a very well articulated discourse “Amazonia has been an indigenous land before and after the invasion of Portuguese conquerors and although many indigenous peoples were and continue to be killed,

¹ Despite the negative connotation given to the term “*índio*” in this context, I will continue using it in the following chapters. However, I will incorporate the meaning that the indigenous movement has given to it, as a revaluated category that gives positive value to what it means to be an indigenous person. Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira (1988) explained that in Brazil the term came out as a new unified category of identity from the indigenous political practice since middle 1970s.

displaced, forced to mix and neglect their Indian ancestry, we are still alive as an indigenous culture.” He added, “As an indigenous movement, we constitute the symbol of resistance against this history of oppression.” He ended by saying, “Nobody can say that we are not indigenous people and that this is not an Indian land;” and stressed, “I am an Indian and I am not ashamed of that.” His speech carried not only the applause of indigenous groups attending the meeting, but also encouraged many of them to repeat and emphasize his last phrase (See figure 1-1). I noticed that some of them were wearing t-shirts that stated the same and other similar phrases such as “*indígena sim!*” (Indigenous, yes!). Also, on a banner put at the entrance of the communal room, I could read the same phrase accompanied with a claim about land tenure that said “we are indigenous people and we are not ashamed of that, we want our land demarcated” (See Figure 1-2). Some other men were also wearing feathers, necklaces, and women wore skirts made of natural fiber.

Later at the same meeting, I approached the young Indian speaker to ask him what indigenous group he represented. Two other young men immediately joined him. They had decorated their bodies in a similar way, painted in black and red lines and one of them had his face painted one side in black and the other in red. I knew then, that they were brothers; the one who gave the speech was the youngest and one of the other two was the *cacique* in their community. They belonged to the *Arapium* indigenous group from one community at the other side of the river. I asked them clarification about the spelling of the name of the group since I had seen it written in different ways in the historical document I had previously reviewed. The *cacique* said that some of them used *Arapyú*, others *Arapium*, but that their name needed to be distinguished from Arapiuns, which is the name of the river. He invited me to visit his village, Vila Franca, because according to him, if I was going to work with the *Arapium* people, I should

know the place where the colonial Jesuit mission, where their ancestors were enslaved, was established. “This is the beginning of the history of our struggle,” he said.

These series of situations and discourses experienced in just one meeting, made me aware about the many critical issues and features I should go through to explore and explain notions of identity and ethnicity, and more specifically the construction of ethnic indigenous identity. Just from the woman’s statement, many concerns emerged. I want to point out two on them, one related to social and historical differentiation based on ethnicity, and the other about the old derogatory image and stereotyping through which the concept of indigenous peoples has been represented. The kind of categorization expressed in her statement that split and located in opposition the notions of people and “*indio*” shows how powerful and well established were colonial ethnocentric conceptions that set negative connotations around the term Indigenous.

The fact that today it is still necessary to say “I am not ashamed of my indigenous identity” made me think about the historical facts that forced many indigenous descendants to reject and hide their own cultures and identities. From the colonial regime to independent Latin American nations, indigenous peoples remained rooted in a racially hierarchical ideology that placed them at the bottom of a scale and established a conviction of a racial dominant superiority of Europeans (Hill 1996; Wassmann 1998; Wade 1997). Wade (1997) points out in his analysis about Indians and blacks in the new Latin America republics, that by the nineteenth century, racist ideologies not only relegated these two groups to inferior status, but also condemned their mixed offspring as degenerate. The negative status of indigenous peoples that still prevails in most Latin American countries has usually led to fluctuations in self-identification. This situation reflects in national measurements of indigenous populations (Gordillo and Hirsch 2003; Brysk 2000; Byrne and Forline 1997; Oliveira 2000). It is interesting how negative images of the past

are re-constructed in the present. This is best revealed in the response to the women's statement, in which the very same Indian stigma appears as the starting point for the re-valuation of their sense of indigenusness.

A more subtle issue is the importance of exotic body images for the assertion of indigenous identity. The body paintings and dresses I saw at the meeting bring at least two related topics within this specific context. One is the use of decorations and native clothes to express the pride of being *índio*, and the other the use of body images to assert their political stand as indigenous people. This type of expression of identity constitutes also a strategic way of asserting indigenous authenticity (Conklin 1997).

I also find it important to highlight the link that people have between the value of their identity as indigenous people and history. What I want to point out is the use given to the historical facts that enforced discontinuity, change, and fragmentation of their distinctive ethnicities to make sense of their own notion of persistence, and the value they are assigning to their indigenous identity. Although the violence of colonial expansion over Amazonian indigenous nations, and the successive governmental projects for the integration into a unified national social and economic system have forced many cultural changes on indigenous peoples' lives, they have not completely disappeared as a distinctive culture. This conception can be contrasted with a widely accepted assumption of an inevitable process of cultural assimilation given the historical factors since colonial times, the current globalization of the world economy and interconnection of people, their cultures, and institutions. These facts have made many anthropologists, governments, and the public regard indigenous people as an ethnic group on the edge of extinction (Moreira 1988, Parker 1989, Ribeiro 1996, Ross 1978, Wagley 1958) and to question the authenticity of those recently claiming their indigenusness.

Underlying the discourses of the scenes runs a common growing worldwide quest for indigenous rights, which emphasizes among others the right to self-identification and land. The claims for land demarcation as an urgent action to maintain and reconstruct fragmented identities have their basis in the historical experience of continuous usurpation of indigenous land. As Maybury-Lewis has pointed out, the threat to the indigenous people is not, this time, of slavery, but the expropriation of their land, and the total destruction of their way of life, if not of their personal life as well (2003). The emphasis on land claims also brought to my mind the fact that many of the world's social movements and especially those of indigenous people are largely struggles for the defense of place. The presumed "unique" tie between indigenous people and their land has constituted one of the central arguments to assert indigenous ethnic identity and the tenure rights associated with this status (Occhipinti 2003; Gordillo and Hirsch 2003).

Remarks on the Subject

It is clear then, that the claim of ethnic indigenous identity among different groups who reaffirm their eroded identities and assert their rights over land to recover and secure their cultural continuity has become an intense issue around the world (Oliveira 1999; Miller 2003, Occhipinti 2003). Among the varied concerns raised are the apparent cultural assimilation processes that many indigenous groups have experienced, and the dramatic demographic diminishing or disappearance. In many cases, these issues have constituted a primary fact by which governments argue against the legal recognition of indigenous status and associated rights to certain groups (Santos and Oliveira 2003, Warren 2001, Miller 2003). While some debates go in this direction, what this study focuses on is the challenges that this phenomenon offers to anthropological perspectives that predicted a full integration of indigenous cultures to dominant national societies. From this point, many questions and worries arise regarding well established conceptions and definitions of indigenous people, and linear and oppositional models that

created dichotomies, such as traditional versus modern or pristine versus acculturated in the understanding of ethnic construction and relations. The claim of ethnic identity has also become a new space to speak for those who have been excluded from major forms of representation (Hall 1997; Taylor 1994). A combination of issues of identity, ethnicity, and place become also critical in this matter. In this sense, it is also of equal interest the understanding of indigenous groups' relationship with land, their historical imagery and knowledge of land, and the importance of land in the constitution and revitalization of peoples' identity.

Indigenous identity claims are of such complexity that it is necessary to put together different theoretical approaches in order to be able to deal with the sort of issues that intersect in this phenomenon. Thus, I consider that explanations of ethnic identity construction cannot emerge from a single perspective. An analysis in this way can risk subordinating the importance of certain aspects of peoples' identity. I am referring to the intertwining of social, cultural, spiritual, political, emotional, and economic aspects that provide the basis for the dynamic construction and meanings of ethnic identification. Since claims for recognition of indigenous identity are highly controversial, I need to be very clear in the scope and limits of my analysis. This is because studies on the increase of ethnic identity claims are generally focused on the search for the material forces that motivate them. That is, the economic and political interests that move people to self-identify as Indians. Therefore, I need to clarify that I am not looking at the possible economic and political gains or losses of this "choice." I am not examining why some people chose this identity and others did not. What I am interested in is *how* culturally mixed people construct the meaning of their indigenous identity and also what are the material, symbolic, and historical means that help shape this identity. In this sense, the meaning of being indigenous constitutes an important exploratory aspect in this study.

In this study, I integrate constructivist, historical, and place perspectives. The constructivist approach of ethnic studies allows for relating the material, symbolic, and emotional features of ethnicity (Cornell and Hartmann 1998; Anderson 2001). The constructionist approach combines valuable insights from the primordial and instrumentalist views, while at the same time paying attention to context. In that way, ethnicity is neither the result of an automatic and predicted response rooted solely in a rational calculation of the cost and benefits, nor is the primordial given what comes to unite an ethnic group as such. However, this sole approach would not explain the changing expression of ethnic identification over time and particularly the changing meaning of indigenous identity. Thus, I integrate an historical approach to help understand the influence of different processes that have given diverse values to the category of indigenous people and the way they help to construct current meanings of indigenous ethnicities (Hill 1996). Historical perspective also helps to understand the historical formal representation of indigenous peoples by colonial and state powers, to recognize that there is not a single historical experience and that our knowledge of the past is social and exists in culturally determined power structures (Munslow 1997).

Since claims of indigenous identities have also integrated claims for land rights, studies in ethnicity have tended to interpret the need or desire to secure land rights as the sole motive for self-identifying as indigenous people, as if land were to have only an economic value. Taking into account that land constitutes a central issue of controversy, and that in the conceptions of indigenous people, land is considered the main source for their cultural survival, I integrate into the analysis perspectives of place (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003). The perspective of place helps to understand both the symbolic and material dimensions of land as place central to the construction and reproduction of the meaning of indigenous ethnic identity. In other words, I

explore the way people have formed meaningful relationships with the land they inhabit and how their life experiences in the land form their sense of indigenusness. This perspective also helps to understand the way land is politicized and used to voice peoples' claims of indigenusness.

What are the challenges that indigenous identity claims generate for the understanding of the presumed historical discontinuity of many indigenous groups? Are questions of authenticity still appropriate in a dynamic historical context in which identities are constantly being formed and transformed? In the next section, I will provide an overview about the diverse theoretical approaches used to address ethnic formation and the critical dilemmas regarding identity construction.

Overview of Literature

At national and international arenas, identity claims are increasingly voiced. Indigenous rights movements constitute the main contexts through which identity is strongly asserted. Many of these movements have formed to construct and express an ethnic identity that is in many ways tied to claims to territorial rights (Brysk 2000; Dean and Levi 2003). One of the starting points of a sequence of arguments and controversies regarding the emergence of ethnic identity claims is the fact that the term "indigenous people" has come to embrace a diverse array of societies. In these are included those conceived as being greatly influenced by Western cultural and social system of values. The sort of questions surrounding the ethnic identity of those claiming indigenusness comes from difficulties experienced with the broad meaning of the definition of indigenous people. It has also come to be problematic for the general classification of indigenous people as a distinctive ethnicity. It is even more complex when, at least in theory, special rights have been assigned to this ethnicity. Dean (2003:5) asserts, "An indigenous people become an ethnic group not simply by sharing such things as group name, connection to homeland, and beliefs in common ancestry, culture, language, or religion, but only when such

traits are consciously recognized as emblems of connectivity and are mobilized at least in part to develop a sense of political solidarity.”

To understand the basis of the arguments it is necessary to first review the theories and approaches that support the explanation of what constitutes ethnicity and the contemporaneous ethnic revival and its implications in theoretical and practical terms. It is also important to examine how this concept has come to serve as the basis for individual and collective identity among many people and groups around the world.

Questions of Ethnicity and Identity

Ethnicity has constituted the subject of study of different social sciences such as sociology, psychology, and anthropology from which several explanations of the concept emerged. In general, these explanations have placed the term ethnicity as a cultural or political phenomenon, as a psychological process, a symbolic expression, a particular aspect of human nature, as a form of social organization and classification, and as a category of identification. We have been told by the different disciplines that ethnicity points to a group of people, who share an identity, culture, biological characteristics, a link with a homeland, a sense of common origin, belonging, beliefs, and values. Ethnicity comprises in this sense, social features such as language, religion, costumes, kinship patterns, and dress (Croucher 2004; Barth 1969; Hutchinson and Smith 1996; Tilley 1997; Eriksen 2002; Romanucci-Ross et al. 2006). Despite the variety of perspectives that have tried to explore the concept, ethnicity still produces intense debates not only in its definition but also in the historical and social contexts in which it continues to persist or re-emerge.

Although widely accepted among social scientists during the 1950s and 1960s that ethnicity was to decline in importance, fragment, and dissolve in the homogenizing tendencies of modern world politics and economy, a myriad of emergent cultural and ethnic identities is still prevalent on a world wide basis (Friedman 1998; Thompson 1989; Wade 1997; Eriksen 2002).

This situation indicates that ethnic affiliations are not only historically important, but also have not disappeared from present world conditions. Hutchinson and Smith (1996:3) point out that ethnic communities have been present in every period and continent and have played an important role in all societies. It seems then that a major characteristic of ethnicity is its paradoxical persistence through change and social and cultural interactions. As Barth (1969) asserted long ago, it is not through geographical and social isolation and the absence of mobility that cultural diversity and ethnic distinction persist.

The assimilation paradigm² used to understand ethnic relations until the middle of the twentieth century was overtaken by a series of new questions that suggested the opposite of its predictions. It was expected that cultural attributes comprising ethnic identity could change through ethnic interactions and would inevitably be lost during the process of assimilation (Anderson 2001). This conception based on a functionalist perspective implies a direct relation between ethnicity and traditional culture, which focused many of the anthropological studies on the understanding of the internal social group mechanism of integration to other societies. Acculturation envisioned as a one-way process, predicted that traditional ethnic groups would change in the direction of dominant modern society and in this process would subordinate to other forms of social organization and differentiation, such as class. Class was the main source of understanding of processes of social stratification (Hutchinson and Smith 1996; Wade 1997; Hall 1997). It was equally expected that fundamental cultural features that distinguished ethnic groups, such as native languages and cultural practices would be lost. In sum, this meant a rejection of ethnic group's own identities and cultural expressions.

² Gordon (1964 cited in Thompson 1989:79) defines assimilation as “a process or series of stages through which people pass in the course of adapting to other culture. The first stage commonly referred as acculturation makes allusion to the learning of language, values, and other models of cultural discourse that predominate in the host society.”

However, instead of these expected predictions, many ethnic groups did not subordinate to other social classification such as class nor did they totally assimilate into dominant societies. What seems more complex is the fact that many groups thought as assimilated are now revalorizing and embracing their lost identities. What has made ethnic groups persist in a world of constant change? Why did ethnic affiliation not become secondary to other social memberships such as class, as was expected? Why are some groups looking back to their history to redefine, in the present, old and rejected ethnicities? To give some hints on the answers to this kind of questions, I turn to the theoretical approaches used to explain ethnicity.

Mapping the Approaches of Ethnicity Studies

Since the 1970s, the persistence and in some cases resurgence of ethnicity intensified a growing interest in the study of the diverse issues embraced by this phenomenon such as ethnic identity, ethnic relations, and ethnic conflict. The broad literature in the matter is commonly grouped into two main approaches, primordialism and instrumentalism. Much of the theoretical debates on ethnicity has been driven by the divergent meanings ascribed to the primordial and instrumental approaches. These approaches stand in opposition to each other in definitions of ethnicity: how it forms, and what it represents. The primordialist approach includes psychological, cultural, and biological aspects to explain ethnicity. This approach highlights primordial attachments, which refer to beliefs, emotions, and the significance of kinship, religion, costumes, language, place of origin, and shared blood (Geertz 1973; Van den Berghe 1996). Geertz's definition of primordial attachment is expressed as "one that stems from the givens-or more precisely, the assumed givens- of social existence: immediate contiguity, and kin connection mainly, but beyond the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices" (1973:259). He also asserted that in every society, every

person, at different times, primordial attachments “seems to flow more from a sense of natural affinity-some would say spiritual-than from social interaction” (1973:260). Primordialism has been the subject of criticism for presenting a static view of ethnicity, in the sense that attachments are conceived as prior to all experiences of interactions and thus, neglects the formation of emotional ties through social interaction. This vision is problematic in a world of constant interaction and movement. It tends to ignore the dynamic character of ethnicity and the possibility of change and creation of new ethnicities.

The instrumentalist or situational approach, in contrast, explains ethnicity in term of its utility. This means that ethnicity is a resource to be employed for different purposes, an instrument for competition over resources. It emphasizes the political use of ethnicity to pursue changes in social and economic conditions (Banton 1983; Cohen 1996; Eriksen 2002; Roosens 1989). The Instrumentalist perspective rejects the emphasis on the deep-rootedness, spirituality or naturalness of ethnicity of the primordial approach (Croucher 2004). Instead, the instrumentalists assert the ability of groups to compete and choose from a variety of ethnicities and cultures to forge their own individual and collective ethnic identities. For example in the rational choice theory (Banton 1983) individuals are held to act so as to obtain the maximum net advantage and that actions influence alternatives from which individuals have to choose. Instrumentalism also illustrates how politics, the capitalist world-economy, and the state play critical roles in shaping and defining ethnicity (Thompson 1989; Banton 1983). These positions received critics because they neglect the structural dimension in which individual choices are made. Instrumentalists are also criticized for emphasizing material interests over the affective dimensions of ethnicity and neglecting the wider environment in which competition and preferences take place (Hutchinson and Smith 1996). It is conceived that instrumentalism also

fails to explain the force that ethnic identification has for mobilizing people and evoking the passion that frequently accompanied ethnic expressions (Croucher 2004). In sum, while the primordial conception explains the persistence of ethnicity based on the deeply held emotional and natural attachments among human groups, instrumentalists explain this survival in terms of its flexibility, fluidity, and the capacity to change according to circumstances and interests.

Although neither perspective has by itself sufficiently explained ethnicity, they have given the basis for an extensive and varied array of studies in anthropology. Ethnic studies have moved forward to other perspectives through which it has been expected to better understand the paradoxical malleability, power, unpredictable responses to changing conditions, and maintenance of ethnicity. Although the constructionist approach built up on the two early perspectives mentioned, this perspective considers ethnicity not just as a product but also a producer of social relations and collective action. This approach puts emphasis on social definition in which ethnic identities and ethnic group relations are socially constructed. Constructionism relies also on references to primordial sentiments of belonging and the significance people gives to these sentiments (Anderson 2001). Cornell and Hartmann (1998:72) explain, “The constructionist approach focuses on the ways ethnic and racial identities are built, rebuilt, and sometimes dismantled over time.” Constructionism assumes that social conditions drive much of the changing dynamic of ethnic identities and place an active role of individuals in the construction of identity. This perspective stresses the social construction of meaning and knowledge. In sum, this approach improved understanding when recognizing that ethnicity is more than a “given” and is not only the result of an independent and individual choice.

Yet globalization with its particular features, such as the increasing mobility of populations and exchange of cultural values has had a great impact on ethnicity. Many consider that

globalization accelerated the fragmentation of identities and opened new possibilities for multiple identifications. Studies on ethnicity expanded to other dimensions of ethnic expressions. In this regard, studies about ethnicity and interethnic relations embrace a broad array of issues. These are the formation of ethnic groups as imagined communities, ethnogenesis, the creation of transnational spaces and pan-ethnic movements, ethnic diasporas, the historical context from which ethnicity evolve, the politics of recognition, and the discourses and narratives of representation and practices of ethnic identity (Hall 1996; Bloul 1999; Taylor 1994; Anderson 1991; Hill 1996; Wade 1997; Brysk 2000). Stuart Hall, for example, argues that identity is subject to historical contexts, is continually in process of alteration and transformation, and is in part a narrative or kind of representation. Hall asserts, “Identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being” (1996:4).

To summarize, to understand the complexity of ethnic identities and the interplay between persistence and change may require an attempt to link these different perspectives to better interpret ethnicity. This is crucial given the importance of social movements that are worldwide increasingly emerging around issues of ethnic identification. I turn here to the issue of the emergence of indigenous identity in the context of social and political mobilization.

Indigenous Peoples’ Struggles for Maintaining a Distinctive Ethnicity and Land Rights

It is not a coincidence that the indigenous movement emphasizes the use of their history of depopulation, enslavement, and marginalization to assert the right to maintain a distinctive ethnicity. In this sense, identity has become a focal point of indigenous political struggle. The use of strategic collective actions has been of equal importance to obtain or defend indigenous lands. These issues are said to be a way of regaining control over their lives, social organizations

and to some extent the way indigenous people articulate themselves and with the global world (Brysk 2000; Hill 1996; Friedman 2000).

Other studies on the emergence, persistence, and change of identity show how resources are mobilized in the course of this process. These studies argue that identity goes beyond group formation; it requires also strategic allocation of symbolic, political, and economic resources in which the power to define an identity is itself an important political resource. For example, in the analysis about post-colonial politics in Oceania, Wassmann (1998) shows how indigenous peoples have to deal with new conditions that transcend the local in order to preserve their own identity. Indigenous peoples from Oceania claim the existence of Aboriginality as a common identity, which is defined in part by history of contact, tradition, and mixed descent. This study also goes to illustrate how many pacific islanders while engaged in claiming land, cultural knowledge, and political sovereignty, are representing themselves for the general public through the use of images of the past (Friedman 1998). Studies about the persistence in holding membership within non-recognized indigenous groups are illustrative of the different emotional and symbolic meanings of identity. This is the case that Miller (2003) presents about the Snohomish and the Samish of Western Washington State USA. The government offered to them the option to join other legally recognized indigenous groups and receive federal benefits already granted to this group. However, these groups gave up their eligibility to enroll in the other tribes of Western Washington and insist instead on the recognition of their ethnicity.

In Latin America, indigenous political activism began to flow in the 1970s, but it was during the 1980s that indigenous movements gained a position at the global level. Much of this political mobilization addressed issues of self-affirmation and autonomy, cultural distinctiveness, political marginalization and poverty, territorial rights, access to natural resources, and control

over economic development (Warren and Jackson 2002; Van Cott 2000; Toledo 2005) The steps toward the internationalization of the Latin American indigenous cause were accompanied by the ratification, modification, and declaration of international agreements. The convention No 169 of the International Labour Organization (1989) promotes respect for all human rights, recognition of indigenous collective ownership of land, and declares that all government should respect the integrity of indigenous peoples. Additionally, it emphasizes self-identification as the fundamental criterion for determining the groups to whom rights apply. The measures expressed in the Convention influenced the creation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (Dean and Levi 2003). The UN declaration recognizes the self-determination right of indigenous people, which is one of the most important principles in the international law.

At the national level, one of the major influences on internal political reforms was the change or creation of new constitutions. During the late 1980 and the beginning of the 1990s in Latin America a wave of constitutional reforms took place in what has been considered to be a democratic transition³.(Dávalos 2005) This wave constituted an important source for the articulation and assertion of indigenous rights and the recognition of ethnic diversity. Through these reforms, indigenous peoples were able to redefine the conditions of their citizenship and at the same time to establish mechanisms to protect their special collective rights and distinctive ethnicities (Van Cott 2000; Ramos 2002). This is important since relations between Latin American states and indigenous peoples were rooted in a historical racial hierarchy in which conceptions of national identities were constructed on the base of the annihilation of indigenous cultures. Even more crucial is the fact that constitutions were created to protect and preserve the

³ Latin American countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile Colombia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru have replaced or reformed their constitutions (Van Cott 2000).

domination of national elites and justify the removal of indigenous territorial rights (Van Cott 2000).

The indigenous movement in Brazil acquired force in the 1970s, tied to the Catholic Church through CIMI (Indigenist Missionary Council) and many other NGOs who helped to develop political and ethnic consciousness and spoke in defense of indigenous rights (Ramos 2002; Oliveira 1988). The indigenous movement also emerged in relation to conflict over land. Projects that promoted “development” have frequently affected indigenous land and lives. Cases such as the Yanomami, in which an estimate of about 1000 Indians died during the construction of Brazil’s perimeter north road, illustrate the range and sort of land conflict to which indigenous people have been exposed (Ramos 1998; Brysk 2000). Ramos (2002) points out that with the 1988 Brazilian Constitution the condition of indigenous people improved in terms of the changes in the assimilationist perspective of previous constitutions. However, in terms of land rights, the Brazilian state continues to have control over indigenous lands.

Indigenous struggles are also about transformation of the sense of difference through claims for recognition. That is to say that the politics of difference is to recognize the unique identity of a group and their distinctiveness from every one else (Taylor, 1994), but not to perpetuate the projection of an inferior image of indigenous people that has historically served as an instrument of oppression and marginalization. The category of indigenous people born from the colonial experience of European domination over indigenous cultures becomes the embracing concept of many groups around the world who struggle for the defense of their cultures and land. In this process, indigenous groups have come to deal with the vagueness of the very definition to the term “indigenous people” in order to hold the rights they claim. In the

next section, I show the kind of debates about the concept, meanings and practical implications of the term.

Meanings and Implications of the Concept of Indigenous Peoples

The focus on official recognition of indigenous status is said to be the result of actions of emergent indigenous movements who are using the legal framework that Convention 169 and other international legal agreements provided (Warren 2002). However, the term “indigenous peoples” as a significant concept in international practice has created many disagreements regarding its meaning and practical implications. One of the issues brought up is how a term that primarily developed in areas with a specific history of European domination and colonization should be applicable to all regions. It is argued that indigenous peoples as a legal category requires precise definition, since it would make sense in some societies but not in others (Bowen 2000).

In the international legal framework, it has been difficult to formulate a single globally viable definition from which to determine who exactly would acquire this status and its particular rights (Kingsbury 1998). This has brought great controversy in the cases of Asian and African countries in which debates about the relevance or irrelevance of the concept of indigenous peoples are of great importance. Kingsbury (1998), for example shows how Asian states argue that the concept of "indigenous peoples" is so integrally a product of the common experience of European colonial settlement as to be fundamentally inapplicable to those parts of Asia that did not experience substantial European settlement. During the discussion of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, long discussions were held about the serious economic, political and constitutional implications of the definition contained in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This was the call of some African countries where the majority of population is indigenous people: to clarify who and where indigenous peoples are located in

order to avoid ethnic and tribal conflicts within and between countries. After 25 years of debates and negotiations, the Working Group approved the declaration. On September 13, 2007 was announced the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of indigenous Peoples by the United Nations General assembly (Cultural Survival 2007).

In general, the definition of indigenous peoples⁴ comprises features such as being native or belonging to a place, descents of those who occupied an area prior to foreign invasion, politically disadvantaged ethnic groups that preserve a subsistence economy and maintain an unbroken ancestry (Eriksen 2002; Niezen 2003; Dean and Levi 2003). In the analysis of the UN definition of indigenous people, Niezen (2003) expresses that this definition corresponds to three interrelated ways of the meanings given to the category: legal/analytical, practical/strategic, and collective. The former, which represents the official and scholarly definition, seeks to isolate the historically distinctive phenomena and social diversity of the group who identify with this category. According to the author, this created a disjuncture between analysis and identity that will exclude many groups from the definition. The second kind of meanings refers to self-definition, or the option of different groups to define who is indigenous. The third is related to collective self-identification, which emphasizes that indigenous people are not only those who define themselves as indigenous but also those who are accepted in the global network of communities and groups claiming their recognition.

International recognition of indigenous status includes also a variety of other important components, such as the rights to preserve unique cultures and ancestral territories. In Latin America, indigenous people's rights movements have emphasized the control of land and natural

⁴ The UN report by Jose Martinez Cobo stated that, "indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed in their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories or part of them" (Cited in Niezen 2003: 20).

resources as a key condition for the achievement of self-determination and cultural survival rights (Brysk 2000; Toledo 2005; Warren and Jackson 2002). In this context, the profound relationship of indigenous groups to land constitutes a central theme in global discussions of indigenous people's rights (UN 1981; CWIS 1994). Land tenure has become a centerpiece of political struggle for the preservation and maintenance of indigenous culture, and distinctive ethnic identity. International law has acknowledged the legally protected rights, unique to indigenous people to land and resources. As stated in the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations Part IV Paragraph 23, the terms "land, territory and place means the total environment of the land space, soil, air, water, sea, sea-ice, sky, flora and fauna, and other resources which indigenous people use historically and on which they continue to depend to sustain and evolve their culture" (CWIS 1994). In this way, the importance of land to the formation of contested and claimed ethnic indigenous identities will be the focus of the next section. I am locating the analysis in the perspective of anthropology of place and space.

Land as Place of Ethnic Expression and Political Struggle

Indigenous people have historically been linked to land as their main source of survival and as an essential element for their identity and distinctive cultures. The way people create meaningful relationships with places and their significance to the development of conceptions of the self and identities are some of the key aspects in the association of ethnicity with land. Unlike many anthropological studies that have often assumed that place is unproblematic, a simply location or passive object, Rodman (2003:205) asserts, "Places are not simply containers. They are politicized, cultural relative, historical specific, local and multiple constructions." Based on studies on Melanesian ethnographies, she addresses the issues of voice and place arguing that places are socially constructed; "a lived experience" and that for their understanding need to be taken into account conceptions of power. She calls for recognizing that "places like

voices are local and multiple.” Place has then an individual and collective meaning that is formed and transformed through experience and through sharing with other people.

Place has been also interpreted as a “contested space” an approach that pays attention to social conflicts located in specific spaces and in which social actors hold different positions regarding the control of resources (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Schminck and Wood 1992),. In analyzing the relation between geographical sites, as contested space, with social conflict, Kuper (2003:258) defines site as “a particular piece of social space, a place socially and ideologically demarcated and separated from other places.” This indicates that social relations are articulated through particular sites and that the importance of these sites depends on the meaning and messages that arise from them. In that sense, a site can be a village, building, an indigenous sacred area, or a courtroom since each of them evokes a range of responses.

Symbols and rituals not only reinforce people’s connection with land. They also mobilize people into regional or nationalistic causes when the correlation between identity and the land is questioned and threatened. This idea is used to argue that it is within the political context of conflicting rights over territory that ethnic identity gains its major expression (Saltman 2002). Other studies have showed that tradition has been used as a political instrument to get access to and control of specific areas not only by indigenous peoples, but also by the state. Indigenous peoples have used their identification with specific places as a way to demonstrate their heritage and ancestral rights to land (Saltman 2002). Culturally mixed groups, in order to re-gain access and control of the regions they inhabit, have also invoked land, as a place of cultural value and as a key source for recovering and preserving their identity. Occhipinti (2003) shows how the conception of indigenous peoples’ close connection to land was one of the strongest arguments to gain recognition of land rights and indigenous status of high land communities of village of

Salta in Argentina. Land in this context was claimed based on both, its cultural and economic significance. The study also shows how the process of land claims has contributed to central questions of ethnic identification. This is because arguments against the recognition of these indigenous peoples' land rights were linked to ideas of acculturation, a process apparently experienced by these indigenous groups. This conception made opponents consider them in fact not indigenous, because of their loss of indigenous language, the lack of traditional kinship relations, and the use of Western clothes and artifacts.

In Brazil the emergence of several indigenous movements of culturally mixed people claiming recognition of indigenous status is also associated with claims for land tenure rights. Land in this context is also claimed as the meaningful place for the recovery of their own history, lost identities, and cultures. These movements started in the northeast during the 1970s (Oliveira 1999), reached the southeast during the 1980s (Santos and Oliveira 2003; Warren 2001), and now emerged in the lower Amazon region, state of Pará (Ioris 2005; Vaz 2004). The indigenous identity movement of the northeast of Brazil is of special importance. This movement emerges in one of the major areas of cultural changes due to European colonization and national development initiatives. Pacheco de Oliveira (1999) shows that during the 1950s there were roughly 10 indigenous groups in the region; however, by 1994 the number increased to 23. What makes this change more controversial is the lack of cultural distinctiveness as indigenous people, specifically because of their cultural mixing, and their recent emergence as an indigenous movement. Oliveira asserts that a particular social fact of the indigenous movements from the northeast is the process of ethnogenesis, which embraces the emergence of new identities and the recreation of old recognized ethnicities.

In the study about the emergence of the indigenous Kaxixó in the eastern of Brazil, Warren (2001) asserts that the struggle for land constituted a potential force that motivated many individuals who had previously abandoned their identity as indigenous people to self-identify as Indians. Using the term “posttraditional Indian” he explains that it refers to the “active attempt to rediscover, recuperate, and reinvigorate that which has been dismembered”. In other words, “posttraditional Indians look to tradition or what is left of it, as a central point of reference” for their claims (2001:21). In a different study, Santos and Oliveira (2003) show how the relationship and significance of archeological sites constituted for the Kaxixó the crucial element for the formation and claim of their identity as an indigenous group. Thus, as the cases showed, the relationship between place and identity constitutes an important concept in the analysis of the construction of ethnic indigenous identity.

Placing the Problem

From the first time I entered into contact with the indigenous movement, I was amazed by the commitment of their people to their cause and the beauty and immensity of the regional landscape. They both have come to constitute not only an infinite source of information for this study but also a source of inspiration for my personal and professional learning and thinking about ethnicity and the multiplicity of conditions and contexts in which it emerges and articulates itself in the voices of indigenous people. In this sense, the area I am talking about is more than a mere “geographical location;” it has a history embraced in the forms and changes experienced in the landscape and in the individual and collective memories, stories, fears, and hopes of the people that have been part of the same history. I will call it then, the “place” of study, since from my personal experience I learn that it is full of historical, cultural, and political meaning.

My first idea for identifying a place to develop my field research within the area of influence of the indigenous movement of the lower Tapajós and Arapiuns rivers was to

concentrate in *aldeias*⁵ that had recently joined the movement. Although this idea was maintained, some changes generated from the dynamic of the relationship between the *aldeias* and the indigenous organization, CITA, based in the city of Santarém. Then, I carried out the research in two different but related places. One place refers to the *aldeias* of Caruci and Lago da Praia located close to the mouth of the Arapiuns River where it joins the river Tapajós. The other place was the office of CITA, where all the members and representatives of the various indigenous groups come together to plan, negotiate, decide, and take actions on many of the issues that concern them as an indigenous movement. In this way, I was able to connect the local dynamics of the process of identity construction with the dynamic of political expression of their ethnic identities within and outside of the region.

Background: How the Indigenous Movement Started

The movement for the recognition of indigenous status and land tenure rights began in 1998 in the *aldeia* of Taquara when its members formally declared themselves to be descendants of indigenous Munduruku group and sent a request for legal recognition of their indigenous status to FUNAI (Ioris 2005; Vaz 2004). This decision created commotion because it appeared within the context of negotiation with IBAMA for conflicts related to the overlap between the community's land and the forest reserve Flona Tapajós (Ioris 2005). After this first move towards identification as indigenous Munduruku, two other communities, Bragança and Marituba located in the area of influence of the forest reserve also started claiming their indigenous descent. Then, the movement rapidly spread over the region along the lower Tapajós and Arapiuns rivers. Since then 38 communities started claiming their indigenous status and

⁵ The term *aldeia* in Portuguese refers to an indigenous settlement. I will continue using this term instead of community to indicate a settlement. This is because in the context of the study, it has come to constitute an important source of identification and differentiation of indigenous areas from those considered non-indigenous settlements. Community is also used by the movement to refer to the group of people who lived in the *aldeia*.

joined the regional indigenous movement. In 2000, the Indigenous Council of Tapajós-Arapiuns (CITA) was founded. It represents 12 ethnic groups: the Munduruku, Maitapú, Cara Preta, Borari, Tupinambá, Cumaruara, Arapium, Arara Vermelha, Jaraqui, Tapajó, Apiaká, Tapuia, Indians. They are located in the municipalities of Aveiro, Belterra and Santarém, to the west of the state of Pará⁶. According to CITA, there are approximately 5000 indigenous people members of the organization (CITA n.d.b).

CITA is organized through a general council on which sit two representatives from each *aldeia*, and an executive board composed of six “*conselheiros*” elected in a general assembly for a period of two years. This coordination has a coordinator (who is the legal representative of the organization), a secretary, an accountant and supervisors and a person in charge of women and youth programs. The general council has the responsibility of planning, coordinating, and approving the activities developed by the executive coordination and the departments. A general assembly is developed every year with the *conselheiros* and other indigenous authorities, such as local *caciques* (chiefs). The assembly is the space for political decisions, strengthening of the organization, and cultural revitalization. Besides the assemblies, every year the “Encounter of Indigenous groups from the Tapajós and Arapiuns region,” is celebrated which constitutes one of the crucial events for the political strengthening of the organization and for the recovering and recreation of indigenous culture. Since CITA’s foundation, there have been four principal coordinators. The person who holds this position constitutes the main figure in the movement, not only because of the level of responsibility this person carries, but also because his election depends mainly on his leadership and acceptance by all the indigenous groups.

⁶Currently, 16 communities affiliated to the indigenous movement claim Arapium ethnic identity. They are, in the right bank of the Arapiuns River: Vila Franca, Maranhão, São Miguel, Tucumi, Nova Vista, São Pedro, Mucuri, Braço Grande and Alto Mentai. In the left side, Caruci, Arimum, Miripixi, Pedreira, Yuaretê, São José III, and Cachoeira do Maró

During the first four years of functioning CITA worked closely with the NGO *Grupo Conciencia Indígena*, GCI. Members of GCI are students, schoolteachers, and volunteers from the city of Santarem, who created the organization in 1997 with the purpose of recovering their Indian identity. GCI supported the regional indigenous movement by providing information about indigenous peoples' rights, revitalizing the Indian image, and raising ethnic pride. When I went to visit them for the first time in 2004, both organizations were sharing installations in Santarem and GCI was supporting part of CITA expenses economically. By 2006 when I came back to continue my field research, they had separated offices and GCI had almost disintegrated as an organization due to economic and internal conflicts among its members. CITA was functioning with the economic support provided from the PDPI (*Projeto Demonstrativos dos Povos Indígenas*). The project supported the political and cultural strengthening of CITA (CITA n.d.a). Besides PDPI, CITA has received economic support from the Franciscan order based in Santarém. In 2006, an office of CIMI north II was established in Santarém to help the organization with its political mobilization. By March 2008, CITA organized a website elaborated with the help of CIMI (www.cita.org.br accessed on March 15, 2008).

The CITA and GCI organizations have played an important role in the process of negotiation with FUNAI (National Indian Foundation), which has not yet officially recognized their particular indigenous claims. A report sent in June of 2004 by FUNAI indicated that a proposal for land identification and delimitation in the area of Tapajós-Arapiuns was established. The report clarified that all the indigenous lands were included in the list of areas to be demarcated by the PPTAL⁷ (*Projeto de Proteção às Populações e Terras Indígenas da*

⁷ The PPTAL was created in 1991-2 with the purpose of concluding the process of land demarcation particularly in the Amazon region. According to the first term established by the Brazilian constitution, the demarcation of indigenous land should have concluded by 1993. Through PPTAL, FUNAI intended to accelerate the process of land demarcation (Nobre 2002).

Amazônia Legal). The plan divided the region in three areas: high, medium, and lower Tapajós and Arapiuns. The report noted that the land in Takuara, Bragança and Marituba was already identified and delimited and only required the approval of the Ministry Justice to proceed with demarcation (FUNAI 2004). It also mentioned the organization of the Technical Groups (GTs) to proceed with the identification and delimitation studies.

However, in February of 2006, CITA received a report from FUNAI informing the decision made by the PPTAL to exclude from the list of indigenous lands to be demarcated the areas of the lower Tapajós and Arapiuns. As justification for this decision were given two reasons: the lack of time to finish activities before the end of the PPTAL project (it concluded by the end of that year); and the apparent inconsistencies in the list of indigenous groups provided by CITA. For FUNAI it was not clear how many communities of the region were claiming their indigenous identity, a situation that according to the institution would require additional fieldwork to confirm information (FUNAI 2006). On June 19 2007, a FUNAI's representative of the office of land issues visited CITA to hold a meeting. The representative expressed that one of the reasons the process of land demarcation had not advanced in the area was because the group of anthropologies working in the institution had doubts about the indigenous descent of CITA members (my personal observation). The meeting concluded with the establishment of a list of priority areas to demarcate. In this list, the communities that are focus of this study were considered as second priority. FUNAI also agreed to organize by the end of the year, a Technical Group to carry out the first phase of the land demarcation process (which corresponds to the identification and delimitation). The GT was expected to arrive in the area by September 2007 but only in May 2008, FUNAI call anthropologists, geographers, foresters, and biologists to make up the GTs.

Establishing Connection with the Indigenous People, their Land, and their River

In 2001, four communities located along the Arapiuns River in an area denominated as *Cobra Grande* joined the regional movement. Two of the *aldeias* of this area, Lago da Praia and Caruci are the focus of this study. They assert Arapium and Jaraqui identity. Little is known from the colonial writing record about the indigenous Arapium. The Jesuits recruited them during the 18th Century in the mission of Camarú in the village of Vila Franca at the mouth of Arapiuns River. João Daniel, a priest of the Companhia de Jesus who lived in the Amazon between 1741 and 1757 reported their cultural tradition while living at the mission (Daniel 2004). The Arapium people were last mentioned in 1762 as living in the region of Obidos and Arapuns river (Nimuendaju 1963).

The *aldeias* of Lago da Praia and Caruci are located on the left side of the lower Arapiuns River, which flows through the western part of the municipality of Santarém between the watersheds of the Tapajos and Amazon Rivers. (Figure 1-3). The area of the Arapiuns watershed is approximately 7.064 km². This river is the last tributary of the Tapajós before it joins the Amazon River. Transportation between the *aldeias* and the city of Santarém is by boat, which takes approximately three hours.

Although in both *aldeias* people declared descent from indigenous Arapium, people from Lago da Praia decided to be labeled as Jaraqui, which is the name of the most common fish in the region. Lago da Praia is known for being the place where the Jaraqui fish are found in major quantities. The name of the area embracing the *aldeias*, *Cobra Grande*, has also become a symbol of people's identity. *Cobra Grande* refers to one of the legends about "Enchanted" beings that turn themselves into snakes (Slater 2002). It is considered to be a symbol that expresses people's history in the land. According to the legend a shaman from the Arapiuns region called Merandolino, also known as *Cobra Grande*, had the ability to turn himself into a

snake. It is believed that after his death his spirit continued living in the depths of the Arapiuns River in a place called Toronó located in the *aldeia* of Lago da Praia. The indigenous Arapium and Jaraqui always expressed to me their pride for what they considered to be their own legend. The legend has been transmitted through the stories that elders told in special celebrations and recently has become a theme of study within the curriculum of the schools. It has also become a tradition that in special celebrations, such the Indian day (April 19th) and Independence Day (September 7th), the legend is recreated through songs, dances, and theater shows.

The community of Caruci has a population 89 people that correspond to 21 families. Lago da Praia has a population of 146 people and 29 families. Table 1-1 shows distribution of population by community, sex and age. In each community, a public school functions, which the Secretaria Municipal of Santarém has recently designated as indigenous schools. Currently two members of each *aldeia* are taking a course to become Indian teachers and to structure the new curricula. The majority of the people are Catholics although few families have joined the evangelical churches of *Assambleia da Paz* and *Igreja de Deus*. In a special religious celebration, Catholic services are combined with indigenous rituals. Rituals to mother earth, forest, fire, and the moon have been included to express their Indian identity and connection to land.

All of the members of the *aldeias* speak Portuguese, although they are making efforts to recuperate the *Nheengatú* language. Some of the elders still use some words of the language, which they considered to be their native language. What calls the attention regarding the consideration of the *Nheengatú* or *Língua Geral* as a native language is that it represents the Portuguese domination in the Amazon region during XVII and XVIII centuries (Borges 1994). The *Nheengatú* language derived from the Tupi-Guarani Languages is said to has been

“constructed” at the beginning of the colonial period as an instrument of domination imposed by Jesuit Missions and the colonial power (Ribeiro 1996; Drumond 2003). To date the use of the language is primarily confined to the area of lower Negro river in the Amazon region, where it has come to constitute a source of identity for some indigenous groups of mixed descendants (Borges 1994). In 2004, an indigenous Baniwa from the region of the river Negro was contacted by CITA and GCI to teach classes of this language. In the school teachers encouraged the use of *Nheengatú* words. In the special celebrations and rituals in the *aldeias* as well as in the meetings in CITA’s office greetings, songs and short speeches in this language are always used.

The people from Cobra Grande land organized through a *Conselho Indígena*-Indigenous Council-called COINTECOG (*Conselho Indígena da Terra Cobra Grande*). It was founded in November 2005 and included the four *aldeias* located in the territory: Garimpo, Arimum, Lago da Praia, and Caruci. Its structure is similar to CITA. To consolidate this project they had support from CIMI, which advised them in the process of discussion of statutes and election of legal representatives. By the end of 2006, the community of Garimpo decided to leave the *conselho* due to internal conflict of power. Besides the *conselho*, each *aldeia* has a cacique as the main leader of the group. The cacique position is usually held by a member of the most prestigious family, but they also can be elected through a community assembly.

Embarking on the Research

I started working on this research project in 2003, when as a new PhD student, I focused my interest on advancing my understanding of the formation of social movements and local strategies through which local people express their own needs and interests. This is because in my previous work as practitioner and professional, I became increasingly uncomfortable with the conception of development that persists in explicitly defining not only the forms and relations between people and their natural, social, and economic settings, but also defining the concerns to

be considered. In other words, I wanted to know about people's own perspectives and actions regarding the relationships with their surrounding environments but outside of a specific development scheme. In doing my previous work in development and conservation strategies, I experienced how issues of ethnicity and cultural differences were always present. However, these issues were mainly taken into account as sources of conflict or as potential elements for the implementation of development projects. I lacked analysis of why these aspects move people to take action and how the relation between people and nature was of critical importance in the construction of collective identities.

From this point on, I concentrated my interest on ethnicity. On one hand, what has contributed to orient my anthropological perspective in the study of construction of ethnic identity was my field experience in which dynamics of territorial and cultural boundaries were at stake. In working in environmental projects in Colombia with peasant and indigenous people sharing the same territory, identity constituted a crucial aspect for the way people participated in projects. When I did my Masters fieldwork in Bolivia with community forestry projects in a colonist community located in an indigenous territory, again issues of identity and ethnicity were present marking interests, opportunities, and ways of involvement. Despite this constant encounter, I felt that I paid little attention to the importance of this aspect in people's life. I came to realize that since I was looking at these aspects just through the lens of development, that is, in terms of how useful or not those aspects were for the success or failure of certain projects, I limited my understanding and undermined to some extent the importance that issues such as ethnic identity have for people⁸.

⁸As a personal experience while living in USA was the fact that I become part of an ethnic group, that of Latina. By a process of self-ascription, I came to identify as Latina woman. What is of great surprise for me is how important this ethnicity has become for my own identity, given the fact that when I was living in Colombia, this did not mean much to me.

Research Process

While trying to structure the theoretical approaches for the study of ethnicity, I was told about the case of the lower Tapajós and Arapiuns region by a former student from the Department of Anthropology who was doing research in the area (Ioris 2005). From the contacts and information that she gave me, I started constructing my own networks of relations in the area and identifying the preliminary steps to be taken for my own research. In 2004, I visited the area for the first time with two main objectives in mind: to establish relationships with the people of the indigenous movement to discuss the possibility of developing the research in the following year, and to collect preliminary data. I did interviews and visited the offices of CITA and GCI and the four *aldeias* that constitute the territory of the Cobra Grande land. Additionally, I visited the *Museo Paraense Emilio Goeldi* and the Public Archive of Para to review historical documents and also established contact with the University Federal of Para, which became my host organization for developing the extended research two years later.

Although my intention was to go back to the region in 2005, I could not do it due to difficulties finding economic support to develop the study. By 2006, I was able to carry out the research. In order to be updated on the different issues occurring in the two places of research, I spent short periods of time (between 8-15 days) in each area and kept moving between them until the end of the research period. I spent in total 14 and half months in the field. I spent two months developing preliminary fieldwork. In 2006, 10 and a half months implementing the research, which includes one month in the city of Belem doing archival research. In 2007 I participated in the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the indigenous movement and developed an exchange of information between Colombian and Brazilian indigenous leaders.

Fieldwork and Data Analysis Methodology

To develop the field research, I used three methods: interviews, focus group analysis, and archival research. Additionally, as a fundamental base of research, I used participant observation to create a context of interaction with the members involved in the development of the study (Denzin and Lincoln 2003). These participant observations were recorded as field notes (DeWalt and DeWalt 2001). I did a total of 64 interviews. In the preliminary research, I conducted 18 interviews, and 46 during 2006. Of the total, 51 were individual semi-structured interviews and 13 life histories. In the first year, interviews involved members from the four communities of the Cobra Grande territory and members of CITA and GCI. In 2006, Interviews were done with members of the Arapium and Jaraqui indigenous groups of Caruci and Lago da Praia. To select informants, I used Purposive Sampling, which provides the possibility of finding informants based on a specific interest without an overall sampling design and establishing certain characteristics or conditions (Bernard 2002). Since the first visit was the exploratory phase of the research, the method was useful for the purpose of finding people who self-identified as Indians, who wanted to be interviewed about their indigenous identity, and were members of the communities embraced in the Cobra Grande territory. Selecting people in this way facilitated the initial establishment of relationship with them and diminished possible obstacles to participate.

For the second year, I added other conditions, such having an equal number of interviews for each community, a minimum age of 18, permanent residence in the community, and keeping at least a close balance between the number of women and men interviewed in each community. The life histories were developed with key members, such as the caciques, people designated as important within the communities, and leaders of CITA and GCI. The leaders interviewed from these organizations were members of different ethnic groups and communities associated to the indigenous movement: Borari, Munduruku, Maitapú, Tapajós, and Arapium. All interviews

were tape recorded with prior permission of participants and verbatim transcriptions were produced to conduct data analysis. To develop the interviews, I used a guide topic from which I asked questions to help elucidate the themes of interest: identity as indigenous people, particular ethnic identification, stereotypes, indigenous rights, land-people relationship, and participation in the regional indigenous movement. I also built conversations with participants on particular subjects when this was appropriate and informants felt comfortable in doing it.

I developed one focus group analysis. This method is useful for obtaining access to local socio-cultural idiom, relevant categories, and peoples' common understandings of certain issues (Denzin and Lincoln 2003). The focus group is a collective method that focuses on multivocality of participants' attitudes, experiences, and beliefs. It provides an opportunity for researchers to observe collective human interaction and for participants to freely express ideas (Madriz 2003). The focus group was developed with 15 participants from three communities: 12 people from the Caruci and Lago da Praia communities and 3 other Arapium people from a neighbor community, Vila Franca. Although my intention was to develop the discussion with only 10 participants, the day of the activity more people appeared indicating their willingness to be part of the discussion group. The focus group intended to discuss three major recurrent concepts that appeared during the interviews: land, Indian identity, and indigenous rights. I prepared the questions to be discussed based on the narratives of the interviews and organized them under these three major concepts. For each theme, two questions were asked. Additionally, as a way to motivate the discussion, I organized a table with different quotes from the interviews that referred specifically to each theme.

For the archival research, I reviewed colonial documents, reports, and letters from different institutions and newspapers from Santarém. I visited the library of the Public Archive of Belém,

Pará and reviewed available colonial correspondence between authorities of Santarem and Vila Franca and the *Capitania of Grao Pará* during the period 1757-1777. These correspond to the archive 83 documents 100, 122, and 125; archive 95 documents 3, 26, 96, and 97. My intention was to look for information about the Arapium people and the way they were defined in the colonial documents. The second half of the 17th century was central to my interests, because it corresponds to the application of radical changes in the colonial indigenist policy: establishment and implementation of the Directory of Pombal (1755/1757) and the definitive expulsion of Jesuits missionaries from Brazil (1759). These indigenist policies considerably affected the situation of Amazonian indigenous peoples and the way the government related to them. This also corresponds to the period in which the disappearance of the Arapium people is presumed.

Besides, I reviewed local newspapers in the period between May-July 2006 to record the context in which CITA had become a political actor in the regional and global political arena. It also collected data about its movement in the defense of the Amazon area against deforestation and expansion of the agricultural frontiers, especially soy production into the region. I reviewed official correspondence between CITA and FUNAI and other governmental organizations in order to track information on the land demarcation process.

I followed grounded theory methodology to analyze data from interviews, focus group, and field notes. This method is useful for the understanding of people's experience in a detailed manner. Grounded theory is as an iterative process through which analysis is grounded and derived from the data. The method gives priority to the studied phenomenon or process rather than the setting. Grounded theory is likely to offer insights, creative thinking, enhance understanding, and develop richer concepts and models about the reality studied. The methodology does not start with a theory to set out to verify, instead it begins with an area of

inquiry and what is relevant to that area emerges through detailed analysis. The resulting theory is then, grounded in real-world patterns (Strauss and Corbin 1998; Denzin and Lincoln 2003; Merriam 2002; Charmaz, 2006). I followed the constructivist approach of grounded theory, which allowed me to study people in their natural setting and focus on meaning away from the prescriptive and rigid normative process of early proponents of grounded theory (Charmaz 2006). The constructivist approach “assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretative understanding of subject’s meanings” (Charmaz 2000:510).

Based on the diagram of grounded theory process presented by Charmaz (2006:11), I have designed my own diagram to represent the process of the analysis of the interviews (Figure 1-4). The diagram shows how the data analysis is constructed from the bottom (the interviews) to the top (the final written document). However, the process of analysis is not entirely linear; instead, it requires a permanent re-reading, re-writing, and re-examination of the data that obligates one to move forth and back in the analytical process. This movement constitutes an iterative process that is necessary in order to refine the coding and the analysis produced. The analytical process of grounded theory starts with the initial coding through which one creates codes as one studies the data. These codes are defined through memo writing, which helps to spark our thinking and identify general categories. The second major phase of the analytical process correspond to focused coding that uses the most significant or frequent initial coding to sort, synthesize, and organized large amount of data.

Initial coding refers to the identification, naming, categorizing, and description of the phenomena found in the informants’ narratives. Codes are created as one reads lines, sentences or paragraphs. Through the initial coding, one categorizes pieces of data and summarizes or

describes the content of the data. Coding requires one to ask analytical questions to answer what the data gathered are about, what is happening in the setting, and what the information means. Through coding, one gains new perspectives and understanding of the meaning of data. Initial coding is also provisional, comparative and grounded in the data. It can be reworded to improve the degree the coding captures and condense meanings and actions, and to open to other analytical possibilities. Then, one proceeds with focused coding that implies the selection of the descriptive analysis and grouping them according to conceptual content. Focused coding is more direct, selective, and conceptual than the initial coding. Focused coding uses the most significant or frequent earliest codes to sift through large amount of data. This step requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytical sense to categorize data. Focused coding helps one to check initial understanding of the topic or possible preconceptions that may have influenced the analysis (Charmaz 2006). To define the focused coding one compares data and the relationship between different categories. Through focused coding description of data is turned into conceptual analysis by specifying the properties of the coding. The final step is theoretical coding, which specifies the relationship between the emerging categories of the focused coding. Theoretical codes are integrative and form from the focused codes. These codes help not only to conceptualize how codes are related, but also to move the analysis in a theoretical direction. This step helps to explain why, what, who, where and with what consequences a phenomenon occurs.

As showed in the diagram, memo writing constitutes an intermediate step throughout the process of coding and writing final analysis. It consists in the construction of analytical notes to explicate coding in the context of the interview (Charmaz 2006). Memos provide the basis of the final written document. Through memo writing, I developed initial thoughts on the narratives

and coding, made comparison and connections among them, and developed new ideas and directions in the interpretation of the data. Memo writing is an essential step in the understanding of the content of the data and a crucial aspect in the development of critical analysis of the categories that emerge from people's narratives. It helps to elaborate processes, assumptions, and actions that are subsumed under the codes. Memo writing helped me to maintain focus on the data and not only in my personal perspective. By writing memos, one can link analytical interpretation with empirical reality. It requires going back to the interviews repeatedly to compare and review content and context. I brought raw data into the memos to be able to connect and examine them directly. In that way, I was able to keep the voice and perspective of the people interviewed. To write the memos, I titled them and explained their meaning according to their properties, such as their characteristics, variations, conditions under which the category arises, and how it relates to other categories. To define the theoretical memos, I used the memos to sort and integrate categories. The definition and characteristics explicit in the memos helped me to compare them, discovered new relationships, and create the order that fit the logic of the categories.

Since I was dealing with a large amount of data, I decided to construct a spreadsheet, in which I divided the narratives according to coding, focused coding and theoretical themes. In this way, I was able to put together information from different interviews that dealt with the same issue and sort them according to the frequency and significance. This helped me to compare them and better define the conceptual categories in which different issues of the narratives were grouped. Table A-1 shows an example of the spreadsheet I created. The spreadsheet allowed me to sort the data according to categories and theoretical themes more emphasized in the narratives.

I found the methodology of grounded theory appropriate for the analysis of my data given that I was dealing with a very critical issue in terms of the emotions, passion, and political controversy it generates. The method helped me to preserve the individual voices, experiences, and perspectives of the people participating in the study. I was also interested in exploring the multiple dimensions of identity construction. It allowed me to keep the richness of concepts and sentiments expressed in the individual stories and the particular sense participants gave to their identity, who they were, and who they are to become (Bernard 2002; DeWalt and DeWalt 2001; Merriam 2002).

I, as well, participated of the daily life of indigenous people in their *aldeias* and in meetings and special events carried out by the indigenous organization. Participant observation facilitated interaction with the people collaborating in the research and awareness of the context of different events (DeWalt and DeWalt 2001; Denzin and Lincoln 2003). In this way, I was able to observe both the activities carried out by community members and the physical and social settings in which the activities took place. I did record my observation as field notes. I described activities, people's interactions, and settings through narrative (Merriam 2002). As the study progressed and my relationship with the indigenous groups evolved, I focused observation on specific issues and themes. For example, I focused in special celebration such as festivals, dances, rituals, and religious services; I also concentrated in how people expressed their indigenous identity. In this case, I looked for certain symbolic representations such as body painting, decorations, and speeches.

Study Overview

Chapter 2 focuses on conceptions of indigenous people during the sixteenth century and the different cultural assimilation processes promoted by the Portuguese colonial power in the Amazon region until establishment of the Brazilian empire in the nineteenth century. Using a

historical perspective, the chapter presents a discussion of the categorization of indigenous people, the practical and political implications of the definition and the role of official history in generating and reproducing certain ideas that led to interpret cultural mixing only as a form of disintegration of indigenous cultures and identities. This chapter concentrates also on the cultural and ethnic changes in the Brazilian Amazon region focusing particularly in the region of lower Tapajós and Arapiuns Rivers. An analysis of indigenous Arapium in history is developed based on the themes developed above. I reviewed the presence and presumed disappearance of the indigenous Arapium in the official history and contrasted it with their contemporary political claims.

Chapter 3 examines how the people of the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns region came to see themselves as indigenous people. I focus on the regional context and dynamics that contribute to the formation of the indigenous organization, CITA, and explore the relationships, alliances, and conflicts embedded in the definition of the indigenous movement. I highlight the convergence of two processes, the establishment of conservation areas in the region such as the Tapajós-Arapiuns extractive reserve, and the internal dialogue about peoples' identity. I show that the indigenous movement constitutes a political expression through which individuals rebuilt their identity and re-interpret their past and present history. Indigenous identity is not only the product of present socio-political struggle, but is also founded on the personal and collective histories and memories that tied people to the Indian category.

Chapter 4 concentrates on the analysis of the construction of Arapium and Jaraqui ethnic identities in the region focused in this study. It presents the qualitative analysis of the meaning of being Arapium and Jaraqui Indians and analyzes how they expressed their sense of indigeness, their historical vision as indigenous people, their conception of the land-people

relationship, and their notion of indigenous rights and how this legitimized their identity. The chapter provides analysis of a double process of indigenous identity construction, which refers to the re-construction of the Arapium ethnicity and the creation of the Jaraqui indigenous identity.

Chapter 5 focuses on the local-global interactions in which the processes of identity construction and indigenous rights claims occurred. I show how the formation of the indigenous movement and the definition of the different ethnicities of the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns region intersect with global concerns and debates about conservation of the Amazonian tropical rainforest and alternatives for the economic development of the region. I focus on how the tensions and contradictory discourses of the different actors leading arguments in favor and against conservation and development affect indigenous peoples' struggle for recognition and land rights.

In Chapter 6, I bring together insights gained from the multiple material and symbolic conditions in which indigenous identity and the Arapium and Jaraqui ethnicity are constructed. I examine the most important arguments about the conception of indigenous people, peoples' land relationships and its importance for the formation of identity. I review the perspectives that support this analysis and suggest new areas of future anthropological research.



Figure 1-1. Arapium Indian giving a speech at the community of Lago da Praia in 2004



Figure 1-2. Banner with the slogan of the indigenous movement of the lower Tapajos-Arapiuns region



Figure 1-3. Research site. Source: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/brazil.html>

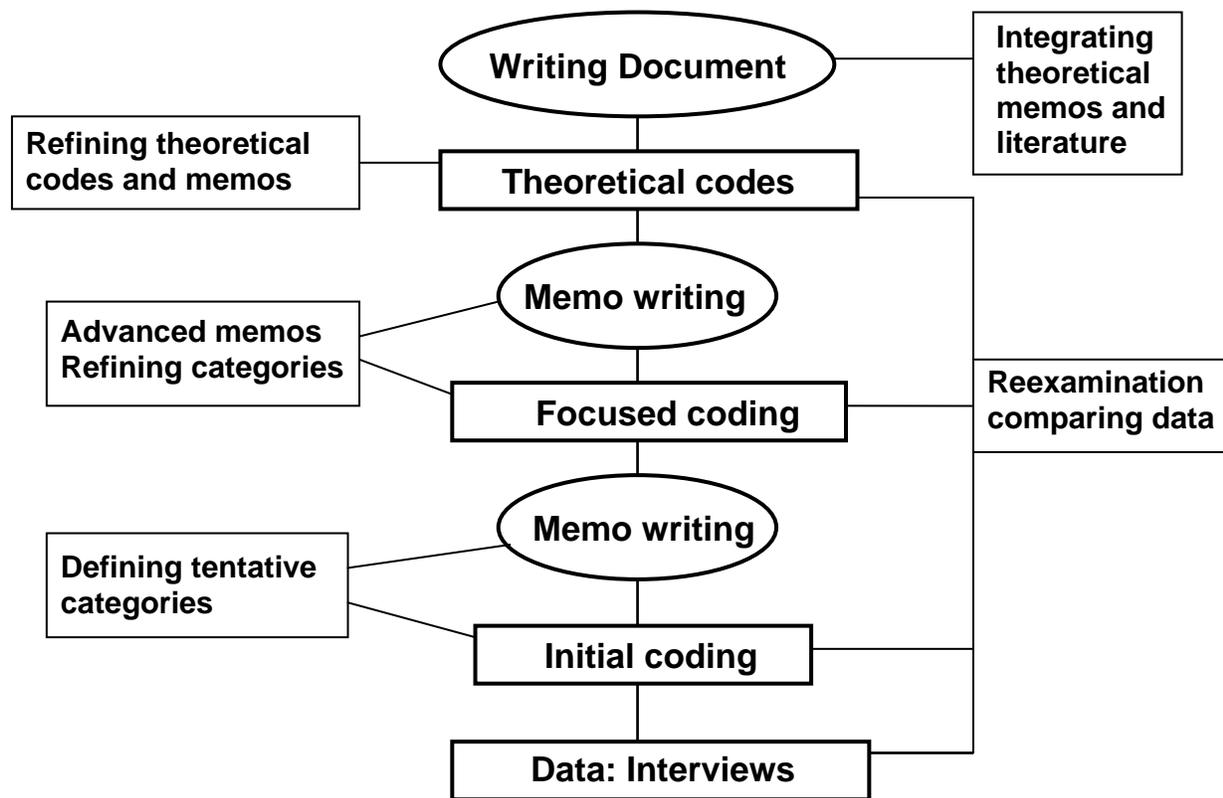


Figure 1-4. Diagram of grounded theory analysis

Table 1-1. Distribution of population by community, family, and sex

| Community | Families | Population | Women | Men | Missing data |
|------------------|----------|------------|-------|-----|--------------|
| Caruci | 21 | 89 | 44 | 45 | 1 |
| Lago da Praia | 29 | 146 | 72 | 74 | 6 |
| Total | 50 | 235 | 116 | 117 | 7 |

Source: Census of indigenous families, CITA 2006

CHAPTER 2 WHO IS INDIGENOUS? A DISTURBING QUESTION

“...We asserted our identity some years ago. When we rescued our identity, we felt good, comfortable, and proud of ourselves; we experienced the freedom of expressing what we are, we got the courage to say, “I am Indian.” Because, even today, being an Indian is not that easy. Some people still have those ideas and feelings in their blood and their heart... Those people think that they are better and the Indians not, they do not respect Indians...” (Indigenous Arapium May 2006).

As one explores anthropological and popular conceptions of the term “indigenous,” it becomes even more difficult to characterize it, given the ambiguity and the variety of factors that influence its definition and meanings. Whatever the definition, the term indigenous peoples connotes many ideas about the very existence and permanence through time of the people that self-identified or have been ascribed to this category. It is, however, clear that present ideas of indigenous people are not just the result of contemporary thinking. They emerged from the past. From the practical experience of this study, while reviewing colonial and current documents regarding the history of the Brazilian Amazon as well as talking to the people that participated in this study, I learned that conceptions of indigenous peoples are also tied to the history of colonial domination from which many of the ideas were created and evolved.

Through this chapter, I explore the conception of indigenous peoples and the theoretical and practical dilemmas that the very definition of the term embraces. Definition of indigenesness is especially critical when one talks about culturally mixed groups claiming indigenous status. It is even more problematic when one relates it to culturally mixed indigenous peoples in the Amazon region. The reason behind this is the pervasive idea that portrays Amazonian Indians as the living representatives of unmodified ancient indigenous cultures. This idea also goes in hand with the persisting view of Amazonia as a green wilderness and homogeneous forest. In this sense, the experience of historical interaction between indigenous peoples and colonial and national powers is commonly envisioned through a dichotomy. On one

side are indigenous groups considered to have changed little or nothing are located. They have managed to live in isolation and avoid being “contaminated” by the Western culture. On the other side are those who went through continuous and dramatic processes of interactions and acculturation and cannot be considered anymore as indigenous.

Rather than providing a specific answer to the inquiry, “who is indigenous?” I delineate and analyze the conceptual basis and diverse historical issues that intersect in debates about definitions and meanings of being indigenous. The conception of indigenusness has not only historically changed according to context, but also varied depending on who asserts an indigenous identity and who ascribes it to a specific group. In this sense, I consider it important to place the analysis on both the perspectives that emerge from those who self-identified as indigenous, and the anthropological conceptions that support or question the assertion of indigenusness.

To develop the analysis, I use a historical approach to examine the different ways through which the concept of indigenous peoples has been understood. I consider that an attempt to understand the present claims of ethnic indigenous identities and its significance requires a critical examination of the different historical processes that shape changing conceptions of indigenusness. I combine this historical approach with an analysis of the anthropological conceptions of cultural assimilation of indigenous peoples to dominant societies in contrast to their persistence and growth in the number of people claiming indigenous identity. In this regard, the chapter explores the forced cultural changes that led to profound transformation of the ethnic configuration and identities of many indigenous groups in the Brazilian Amazon region since European colonization. The study is located between the contexts of Portuguese expansion into the Amazon indigenous nations to the formation of the independent republic.

This is a time in history that recounts the extinction and assimilation of many Amazonian Indians.

I give special attention to the indigenous Arapium, their presence and disappearance from the official written history and their new appearance during the present century. My intention is not to comprehend them in the past, but to understand how the restoration of their ethnicity establishes contradiction with historical official conceptions of indigenusness and cultural disappearance. Hence, I examine how anthropological conceptions of cultural assimilation encounter new challenges for explaining recent restoration of ethnic identities that are justified from the same historical factors that gave base to a widely accepted understanding of the presumed disappearance of the distinctive ethnicities of many Amazonian indigenous cultures. That is, the history of invasion and contact with Portuguese colonial power, domination through evangelization, pacification or “domestication,”¹ the imposition and substitution of indigenous languages by the *Língua Geral*, homogenization or the loss of distinctive ethnicities, and the formation of the “generic Indian” or *tapuio*², and *caboclo*.³ These events that constituted the basis of explanation of disappearance and assimilation, are also used by the movements of culturally mixed indigenous groups to explain the historical resistance and persistence of their ethnic identities. These issues are important to analyze since anthropological studies have tended to explain the cultural mixing as a form of disintegration of indigenous cultures. They have also

¹ Barickman define domesticated as “tame Indians that were transformed into a settled peasantry that would contribute to an expanding commercial economy and uphold Portuguese rule” (1995:327). Some of the people I interviewed still used “domesticated” to explain the origin of their new condition as indigenous Arapium.

² Moreira Neto (1988) explains that the process of detribalization, acculturation, and miscegenation enforced in the missions during colonial times gave origin to the *tapuio*, an Indian without a distinctive culture, language, form of social organization, and system of values and norms.

³ A term used in Brazil to mean “mixed-breeding,” the offspring of an Indian with a White or Black. It is considered a derogatory term which implies a position of social inferiority that not one accept as self-identification (Gomes 2000).

ignored the historical importance of mixed-heritage communities for the maintenance of those cultural expressions and identities that seem unrecognizable and invisible to official understanding of what is to be indigenous. This emphasis of cultural mixture as a form of disintegration of indigenous cultures and identities has led to simplistic understandings of strategies of survival of many indigenous groups.

In Brazil, many of the culturally mixed indigenous groups that emerged since the 1970s have experienced different process of cultural alteration due to intermarriage with other indigenous people, non-indigenous, and black slave descendants, and to accommodation to certain forms of the social, cultural and religious systems of the wider society. João Pacheco de Oliveira (1999) asserts that what gives the foundation to the sense of indigenusness to these groups, such as those from the Northeast of Brazil is not precisely their cultural distinctiveness. As he points out, indigenous groups of the Northeast are the product of historical and political factors that involve a process of re-elaboration of the past and the re-significance of beliefs and cultural expressions, which has given origin to a new social identity (Oliveira 1999; Santos and Oliveira 2003). In this logic, the construction and significance of the sense of being indigenous is not possible to explain just with reference to historical writings of what supposedly indigenous people were in the past. I want to highlight this with what Viveiros de Castro has explained as the theoretical and ideological implications of a history that emphasizes the distant and difference between indigenous societies today and what they once were in the past. This emphasis question the historical authenticity of present indigenous groups (Viveiros de Castro 1996). That is as to say that the criterion for a group to be “officially” accepted as indigenous is based on the degree to which contemporary societies represent original Amerindians. This conception denies the historical processes that indigenous populations went through while

resisting and accommodating to new imposed conditions since colonial times in order to survive. It does not consider the fact that indigenous people have been re-constructing their cultural identities as they adjusted to new situations, new diseases, technologies and power struggles (Hill 1996). In this sense, I think is also necessary to incorporate in the analysis ways in which culturally mixed indigenous groups conceive of themselves through history. In the following sections, I provide a review and analysis of official conceptions of cultural change of indigenous people. I focus on the case of Amazonian indigenous populations.

Indigenous Cultural and Ethnic Changes

In the colonial history as well as in the vast literature focusing on the Amazonian ancient and contemporary indigenous population, ideas about their inevitable extinction or assimilation are generally presented. Although these ideas are based on historical events, contemporary expressions of ethnic affirmation of assumed assimilated or extinct indigenous groups⁴, call attention to conceptions of historical continuity, discontinuity, and ethnic and cultural alteration. This is not to neglect the historical projects of colonial extermination and domination that deeply marked the lives of indigenous groups, bringing some to extinction and others to be forcibly accommodated to the colonial economy and social systems. That is mainly to question linear historical conceptions that conceive only one-way of change of indigenous peoples, that of progressive acculturation and assimilation. It also question visions of colonial domination as a uniform and uncontested process, in which indigenous population had no role in the social-cultural and economic changes experienced.

In this regard, I consider it necessary to review the implications of historical explanations that generate specific views of events and indigenous cultures. This requires as well the scrutiny

⁴ See for example Moreira Neto (1988) for information in the process of depopulation and extinction of indigenous people in the Amazon region during the 18th Century.

of the positions held by those who produce or interpret the information, the relations between those being described and those doing the description, and the type of knowledge expected to emerge. Or as the historian Muslow (1997:1), has expressed “how we see the relationship between the past and its traces, and the manner we extract meaning from them.” It also requires bringing to mind that official written history is not entirely an objective task; it is also based upon the writer’s own rhetoric and strategies of interpretation, strategies that are at the same time shaped by dominant ideological paradigms and particular economic or political contexts.

Official written history has also served as an instrument for the exercise of power. I refer here to the type and extent of knowledge that is provided through official history, that is, one that limits and/or modifies the meaning of events. In other words, a history that withholds or allows and excludes or includes what is permissible or not to be known (Foucault 1972; Munslow, 1997). Then, if we conceive of official history as the one authorized, approved, and sponsored by the support of the colonial or elite powers, then we need to take into account that it may incorporate particular “official” ways of representation of events and people to serve or maintain specific interests. In these terms, it needs to be asked then what kind of interests changing conceptions of indigenous people have served throughout history, and in what way these interests and conceptions are still present in debates that present contentious arguments against the claims of indigenous identity by culturally mixed Indians. The next section presents a review of conceptions of indigenous people, in particular, ideas developed since the 16th century about indigenous from Amazonia.

Colonial Notions of Indigenous People

Written historical records and anthropological studies have tended to signpost specific views of the process of interaction between colonial power and Amazonian indigenous populations. On one hand, a one-way view of cultural change, in which indigenous cultures and

identities subsume under the Western dominant system has been commonly presented. On the other hand, views of the persisting wilderness, homogeneousness, and remoteness of the Amazon region⁵ and its population inflict a sense of fixity. In particular, the view of the Amazon region as an exotic and “pristine” realm of nature created a notion of steady and fragile social and ecological environments unable to change. All these conceptions have contributed to form a notion of Amazonian indigenous people as a social and cultural category characterized by salient naturalistic and idealistic features (Rival and Whitehead 2001). Moreover, in regards to indigenous peoples’ interaction with the wider world, these ideas imply the inevitable loss of their own identities and cultures. The social transformations experienced by Amazonian Indians have been interpreted mainly as an indicative of cultural disintegration and not as a form of adaptation of indigenous tradition and identities (Whitehead 1993).

Among the many ideas about Amerindians created during the colonial period, the indigenous Tupinambá of Brazil represented the most symbolic and idealistic figure of America. According to Janet Whatley, the Tupinambá were irresistible to the European imagination and fascination with foreign societies, “They were known to live in a lush tropical setting of brilliant colored flora and fauna; their natural appearance accorded with European standards; and they were usually naked and cannibals” (Whatley 1992:xxiv). The author presents the English translation of one of the major early classic writings of New World’s people and nature, Jean de Léry’s “History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil”. Léry presented a vivid account of life in the New World and a detailed description of Tupiambá’s war, religion, and cultural traditions. In chapter VIII of his book, he described them as follows (Whatley 1992:56-57):

⁵ This is the classic image of the Amazonia region that portrays it as a gigantic, teeming, expanse, wildly diverse biologically but otherwise undifferentiated entity that covers an impoverished soil that supposedly demonstrate the region’s ecological limitations (Richards 1952). Or as Meggers (1996) asserted, the ecological constraints for the development of intensive agriculture in the Amazon region have also led to limitations of the cultural and socio-political development of Amazonian Indians.

The savages of America who live in Brazil, called the Tupinambá, whom I lived among and came to know for about a year, are not taller, fatter, or smaller in stature than we Europeans are; their bodies are neither monstrous, nor prodigious with respect to ours. In fact they are stronger, more robust and well filled-out, more nimble more subject to diseases; there are none among them who are lame, one-eye, deformed or disfigured...they all truly drink at the Fountain of Youth. They do not in any way drink of those murky pestilential springs, from which flow many streams of mistrust, avarice, litigation, and squabbles, of envy and ambition which eat away our bodies, suck out our marrow, waste our bodies, and consume our spirit.

He also described them as living in an environment where there was no frost and the woods, plants, and fields were always greening. In the context of sixteenth century, the Tupinambá were therefore considered to be survivals of the Golden Age or what was known as the myth of the “age of natural law.” It was supposed that during the period of the golden age men as all other animal species depended for their survival merely from what nature produced. This natural man was literary a forest-dweller, a wild man, a savage, a naked man, who lived a solitary life, slept in caves or under trees, subsisted by hunting and gathering and had no religion and no social political organization (Rowe 1964). According to this myth, the natural man was the classic image of what uncultured human nature was like (Pagden 1982). Thus, descriptions such as those of the Tupinambá nurtured first European images of indigenous people with humanistic idealization, and pervaded the idea that the New World was full of savages with no law or government. Although this type of descriptions might have promoted curiosity and friendliness, they did not last that much. The facts and images received from the New World were also judged from the foundation of Christianity, which largely influenced humanist thinking (Whatley 1992). In this sense, Indians who appeared to the eyes of Europeans as living in “natural conditions” were also judged in a different way. They were interpreted as living in this condition only because they “failed to understand the world as it really is;” that is, they were unable to understand and to deal with the richness of their environment. The inevitable result of this was that “they spent their lives not in the blessed state of natural man, but in miserable

starvation” and failed to benefit from the natural wealth of their environment” (Pagden 1982:74).

Or as Nobrega, the Jesuit of the *companhia de Jesus* that initiated the Christianization effort in Brazil, described the New World environment and the Tupinambá as (Leite 1955:47-48):

[The] land is rich in flora, with a moderate winter and summer. There are plenty of delicious and unique fruits that taste better than any in Portugal. Its seas are plentiful with the best fish. The forests resemble flower and vegetable gardens, with fertile lawns that remind you of the best Flanders’ carpets, inhabited by numerous animal species. . . . However, it is freighting to realize that all these wonders were given to such uncivilized people, who do not know of their worthy possessions, nor have a God, but who believe, however, on anyone or anything who claims to be..

To understand the basis of these perspectives, I proceed to review colonial conceptions of the so-called human nature of Indians and the different ideas through which indigenous peoples were represented. Anthony Padgen explains that two different theories were developed in the intellectual context of the 16th century to support the debates about the nature of the New World population. One interpreted the Indians as “natural man” with imperfect mind and compelled to live outside the human community. This conception gave foundation to the theory of natural slavery, which explained the possibility of enslavement of indigenous people in terms of their social behavior. This can be exemplified in a passage extracted from Padgen’s analysis, “the Indians in the wild were like a dog in the wild, he was failing to fulfill his allotted place in the world, a place which made of him as animated instrument of service” (Pagden 1982:47). Thus, the theory suggested that the Indians were slaves by nature. This theoretical explanation provided to Europeans the moral justification and political rights over indigenous lives and territories. Within this theory, the conception of “barbarian” came to have a great importance in the definition of the Amerindians. In general, barbarian was a term used to classify and describe non- Europeans, who were conceived as culturally and mentally inferior. “Barbarians were men who failed to recognize the forces of the bonds which held them to the community, a wild men who lived in the woods and the mountains far removed from the activities of rational

men”(Pagden 1982:21). The term was also applied to people who were not Christians (Rowe 1964). Based on these ideas, Indians were conceived as barbarians whose culture was defined as deficient and inferior. Padgen asserts as well that the theory of natural slavery was not only a network of beliefs, but also a universal organizing principle. In this sense, the relationship between Indians and Europeans was conceived to be determined by natural and universal law. That is, the law of physics that explained, “All material bodies in the universe are in motion, each one must be moved by another that is more powerful than itself.” This idea located the Indians as the moved and the Europeans as the movers. Therefore, because Indians were, as well, “idle, vicious and without charity” they needed to be moved by those with stronger minds, read Europeans. And, because it was conceived that “tyranny is the only government known to barbarians” they needed to be ruled as slaves (Pagden 1982:48).

As more information became available about indigenous’ political and social organization and the natural environment they lived in, sixteenth century thinkers such as those of the school of Salamanca⁶ moved beyond the conception of natural slavery and proposed a more sophisticated relativist approach. They argued that Indians were not innately backward, but the product of their culture and environment. That is, the inferiority of Indians was not based on their psychology but on their cultural evolution. The theory of natural law served as the basis of arduous and long discussions about human nature and the conditions of enslavement of Indians. According to this theory, the law of nature “was the efficient cause which underpinned man’s relationship with the world and governed every practice in human society,” and could provide

⁶ Padgen asserts that during 1520-30 there was a major change in the intellectual life of Europe, particularly in the life of Spain. This new movement in theology, moral philosophy, and law influenced the theological thinking of Catholic Europe. The Salamanca school called for the need to describe and explain the natural world and the place of men within it. It proclaimed the primacy of the normative behavior of Christians and the rightness of the political and social institutions of Europe (1982). Thinkers of this school argued against the basis of the natural slavery theory.

the basis for ethical judgments. “It is a form of illumination granted to all true men, whether they are pagans or Christians” (Padgen 1982: 61). Natural law was thus a system of ethics about the faculties that permitted men to make moral decisions. Although from this perspective, Indians were considered not to be natural slaves, they were still thought of as human beings lacking sense. This condition was considered to be the cause that made them unable to have laws and to govern a nation in civil and humans terms. This in turn provided the foundation to think of Indians as barbarians that needed to be educated, Christianized, and civilized. Considered to be the model of civilization, Europeans were not only critical of barbarians who did not share their cultural and political values, but imposed them on those considered inferior (Rowe 1964). Thus, the promotion of schooling and disciplining through Christianization and work constituted the basis of the process of making the Indians “like any other civilized men,” that is, as Europeans.

These types of notions about indigenous people nurtured by the descriptive records and ethnographies of missionaries, military campaigns, naturalists and explorers produced between the 16th and 19th centuries, created strong assumptions and constructed dichotomies that gave little room for conceptions of interrelation, diversity, and variability of indigenous cultures and ethnicities. In the analysis of conceptions of indigenous people in colonial writings, Guillaume Boccara (2003) asserts that we should engage in the study of the processes of production of socio-cultural differentiation in historical contexts characterized by uneven social relations. According to Boccara, this task is more important than focusing merely on the way indigenous people were transformed through their long contact with colonizing agents or insisting in the search for “original” cultural traces that still exist in current indigenous cultures (Boccara 2003). The author asserts that writings such as the Spaniard Jesuit missionary José de Acosta (1540-

1600) have contributed to the foundation for the concealment of Amerindians' social dynamic and complexity and to simplifying indigenous realities. It is equally asserted by the author that this type of conception is still present in academic writing. The sixteenth century Jesuit considered as the "father of the missionary enterprise" in the Peruvian region provided a scheme of classification of indigenous socio-cultural and political systems. Boccara analyzes the implications of this classification and the evolutionist perspective implied through the establishment of three broad forms of differentiation of "barbarians."⁷ Each type of barbarian represented a stage of human evolution, degree of social organization, linguistic development, and religious observance. The first type of Barbarian corresponded to those who had the knowledge and use of letters, and possessed an evolved civilization, like Chinese and Japanese. In the second category were those who lacked both a system of writing and philosophical civil wisdom, but had an organized government, religious beliefs, and lived in stable settlements. Here were grouped the Mexicans (Mayans) and the Peruvians (Incas). The third type corresponded to those defined as savages who were nomadic, survived by hunting, dwelled outside of the human community, and had no true family. In this third group were mentioned the Caribs and the peoples of Brazil (Pagden, 1982; Rowe 1964). Boccara affirms that through this classification, "the Jesuit contributed to the creation of an ethnological landscape" (2003:65) that not only situated indigenous people in an inferior position, but also territorialized them according to their stage of evolution. That is, while indigenous people from Mexico and Peru were considered as cradles of increased sociopolitical complexity, the people from Amazonia were interpreted as mere savages organized through simple "stagnant egalitarian societies" or as Acosta labeled them as "numerous herds". This in turn prepared the terrain for planning and

⁷ Barbarianism was conceived as one of the lower stage of human civilization. It was also believed that through progressive evolution all human cultures would reach the highest stage achieved by European people (Pagden 1982).

justifying more efficient enterprises of colonial pacification or extermination of certain groups considered problematic to the interests of territorial expansion of colonial power. In sum, what Boccara points out is that although the dichotomies complex-highlands and simple-lowland societies have been questioned and discarded⁸, it has not completely disappeared from academic language. Or as Viveiros de Castro explains, the traditional model that represented the societies of slash-and-burn horticulturalists of the topical forest as typological hybrids occupying an intermediate evolutionary positions is still deeply rooted in ethnographic tradition (Viveiros de Castro 1996).

Additionally, it needs to be taken into account that ethnohistorical records produced during colonial times were scarce⁹, ambiguous, and contradictory regarding the information they provided. Issues such as the size of Indian villages, population, and abundance of natural resources as well as the social, cultural, and political organization of Amazonian indigenous groups were not always clear. This situation, asserts Antonio Porro, has generated misconceptions about the cultural and demographic changes generated by colonial contact (Porro 1994). He goes on to explain that regarding ethnographic records of the Amazonian region, two different situations at two different times were described. Sixteenth century chronicles depicted “the unmodified Indian way of life” and presented large population numbers, while records from the seventeenth century showed much lower numbers. This fact has led some historians to

⁸ The work of Heckenberger presents evidence of large and complex social formation and settlement patterns in the Upper Xingu, southern area of Brazilian Amazon region (2003; 2007). See also Balée (2003), Denevan (1992), Roosevelt (1994), Viveiros de Castro (1996), and Whitehead (1993).

⁹ Rowe asserts that although “high proportion of ethnographic data published in 16th century relates to the New World, it is also scattered in the sense that there is little information on any one people” (Rowe 1964:2). Besides the Tupinambá and Guarani people, few other Indians had reasonably ethnography of their culture. According to the author, the tradition of social philosophy, which emerged from Greek philosophers, established Greek’s values and culture as the basis of interpretation of human behavior and institutions. Social philosophy thus did not consider ethnographic information on strange people as significant to their endeavor, and made little use of it. This conception influenced the ethnological tradition.

consider first reports as fanciful and consequently to reject them. What is not taken into account about the second wave of reports is that they were done after many years of missionary interventions and population decline generated, among other things, by the spreading of new diseases such as smallpox into indigenous communities. In the process of Portuguese colonist expansion into the Amazon area, they still encountered large Indian populations. For example, the “*Novo Descubrimeinto do Grande Rio das Amazonas*” by Critóbal de Acuña, who participated in the expedition by Pedro Teixeira in 1639 (Acuña 1994 [1641]) described the presence of innumerable indigenous groups along the Amazon River.

In terms of what I have pointed out regarding the persisting wilderness view of Amazonian nature and indigenous societies, it is also necessary to critically examine how these types of notions are embedded in essentialist definitions of indigenous people. In other words, how notions of a simple society, wild, isolated, and dispersed still nurture the image of Amazonian Indians. More important is, how these ideas have pervaded anthropological thinking with conceptions that depict Amazonian Indians not only as unable to attain complex civilization, but also as passive societies moving fast towards assimilation into dominant societies. This kind of notion then, promotes the idea that many of the indigenous people that manage to survive the effects of colonization were, nonetheless, absorbed by the “superior” social-political organization of European civilization and later by dominant national societies. These conceptions therefore do not leave room for thinking about processes of accommodation and re-creation of new forms of indigenous social and cultural expressions that can emerge from long-term forms of interaction and cultural mixture. These ideas practically celebrate the presumed achievement of the so-called “civilizing” project of colonial domination. In the current context and terms this issue would make reference to the assimilation projects that have promoted the integration of

indigenous people into national societies. However, this integration envisioned the acceptance and amalgamation of indigenous people into dominant society only through the loss of their own ethnic identities. I review in the next section some of the critical points between colonial and Imperial Brazilian history used to explain the presumed disappearance of many indigenous groups by processes of acculturation and racial and cultural mixture. Disappearance of the indigenous Arapium is presumed to have taken place in this period.

Projects of Assimilation of Amazonian Indigenous People

Since colonial times, one of the major practices that had accompanied projects of territorial expansion, control of resources and indigenous people's labor-force was the enforcement of acculturation and assimilation to Western values and culture. Beginning with first explorations by Spaniards Francisco de Orellana (Carvajal and Rojas 1941) and Pedro de Ursua (Silva Ugarte 2003) in 1539 and 1560 respectively and later in 1637 by Portuguese Pedro Teixeira (Acuña 1994 [1641]), the natural richness of the area produced an intense process of territorial expansion and domination of the indigenous population and lands. The descriptions provided by these and others reports emphasized two aspects, the existence of innumerable natural resources and numerous indigenous nations inhabiting along the rivers, aspects that made the Amazon region a required area to control, an enterprise in which not only Spaniards and Portuguese participated but also the Dutch and English. From the geographical and political point of view, the expedition by Pedro Teixeira provided Portuguese colonists more accurate knowledge of routes of communication between Andean and Atlantic coast. This was valuable knowledge that served to expand the Portuguese frontier into the Amazon and facilitated the entrance of *sertanistas* to the west area known as *sertão do Amazonas*. They searched for gold, and forest products, and captured Indians for the purpose of enslavement (Ferreira Reis 1931).

However, this colonial expansion was not only carried out by military power, but also through missionary labor, principally by the Jesuits of the *Companhia de Jesus* who came to the area in 1636 and later in 1653. The Portuguese system of colonization of the Amazon region was initiated based on the exploration and commercialization of the *drogas do sertão* -forest product such as cinnamon, Brazilnuts cocoa, and wood -, and through the establishment of missionary centers known as *aldeamentos*. This last constituted an important center for the recruitment and disposition of Indian labor necessary for the development of economic activities. In this sense, the Catholic religious orders with their evangelization mission were at the forefront of the tasks of detribalization of indigenous groups through the practice of *descimentos* (forced removal from Indian villages), introduction of a European regime of discipline and work, and incorporation of a new system of values and beliefs in indigenous cultures. Since the arrival of the first Jesuits to the Amazon, Luís Figueira, the objective of missionary intervention was the conquest of the immense and remote area and the soul of its people, a mission considered urgent given the constant exploration by other European countries in the region (Carvalho Cardoso and Chamboureyron 2003). The Jesuits then helped to complete and broaden the geographical frontier and “spiritual conquest” of the Portuguese colonial power over the Amazon people. Jesuit missionaries became the most important source for the preparation and integration of Indian labor into the economic colonial system. Some historians interpreted this action as one of the “major projects of civilization” of the Brazilian indigenous people (Ferreira Reis 1931)

However, the actions of Jesuits included also protection and defense of indigenous humanity against the cruel treatment of *sertanistas* and colonists. As expressed in the previous passage, that protection was carried out under the notion of conversion to Christianization, in which the idea of progressive change and assimilation to the European culture was also implied.

Among the Jesuits, Antônio Viera initiated a campaign in favor of the protection of indigenous population before the Portuguese court, condemning the abuses that colonists committed against the Indians. The law of April 9 of 1655 prohibited abuses against Indians by colonist and gave to Jesuits the control and administration of *aldeamentos* and the indigenous labor. Once Indians were brought or *descidos* from their communities they were registered and distributed among the colonists to develop domestic or agricultural work (Ferreira Reis 1931). The Jesuits missions thus became important commercial and financial organizations in control of Indian labor. This condition later created conflict with Portuguese colonial power and generated their expulsion in 1757, ordered by Governor Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado. The mission system was seen as an unnecessary and dangerous barrier between the crown and its Indians vassals. Thus, the major motives in ending the missionary power system in the Amazon involved both security and the need for social and economic integration of Indians into the colonial system to maintain control of the available labor-force (MacLachlan 1972).

Vera was the first Jesuit that entered to the area of Tapajós Rivers in 1659. However, it was Jesuit João Felipe Bettendorf, who consolidated the missionary labor in the Amazon and Tapajós rivers. In 1661, he established the mission of *Nossa Senhora da Conceição* known as *aldeia dos Tapajós*, where the city of Santarém is currently located. In his chronicle of the *Companhia de Jesus no Maranhão* he described the process of evangelization and changes imposed on indigenous cultural traditions such as the prohibition of ritual celebrations and imposition of monogamy among the Indians. The region of lower Tapajós became an area of great influence of Jesuit missionary intervention. Besides the Tapajós mission, along the river several other missions were established. These were the *Nossa Senhora de Purificação* know as *aldeia dos Boraris*, today Alter do Chão; the mission of *São José*, *aldeia Matapuz*, today the

village of Pinhel; mission of *São Inácio*, aldeia Tupinambá, today the village of Boim; and, mission of *Nossa Senhora da Asunção*, aldeia dos Arapium, today the village of Vila Franca (Leite 1943). According to Ferreira Reis (1979), the pattern of demographic occupation of the Tapajos area developed around the mission even after they were ended.

The ethnography by Jesuit João Daniel provided extensive information about Amazonian geography, rivers, history, population, indigenous cultures, fauna, and flora. In general, he described the diversity of natural resources of the Amazon region, suggested the way they should be utilized, and recommended the expansion of agricultural production. He presented details about the process of learning the standards of European “arts and culture” by the Indians, and the radical changes experienced in their cultures. He explained how the introduction of a calendar of *festas* or Catholic religious celebrations such as Christmas, resurrection, and Holy Spirit facilitated these changes. All these celebrations, he asserted, incorporated also some aspects of Indians own culture and beliefs. He also presented data on the decimation of the indigenous population as a result of cruel treatment by white colonists, and the spread of measles. According to his ethnography, between 1749-50 an estimated 30 thousand Indians died in the missions due to the spread of this epidemic.

One of the factors considered to be an indicator of the process of acculturation is the loss of native language. In the case of colonization of the Amazonian region, the Portuguese and Jesuits reinforced the adoption of the *Língua Geral* or Nheengatú, the language that derived from Tupi-Guarani. Also, this language has been considered as one of the markers of Portuguese domination during the 17th and 18th centuries in the Amazon region (Borges 1994; Drumond 2003). The *Língua Geral* was used not only to dominate but also to “civilize” the indigenous population according to European rules. For at least two centuries, this language represented

Portuguese civilization and power in the region. Luiz Borges (1994) asserts that it was through ethnic dispersion into the Amazon region that the *Língua Geral* suffered modifications and became, for some indigenous groups, their main language. Since the 18th century the use of *Nheengatú* by some indigenous groups, particular by those of mixed descent represented the formation of a new identity, such as the case of Baré and Baniwa indigenous groups of the Rio Negro.

In terms of what the religious mission represented in the process of cultural change, Moreira Neto asserts that the missions constituted the center for detribalization and cultural homogenization of the remaining indigenous nations concentrated in the *aldeamentos*. These religious centers gave origin to the *tapuio*, a generic term used to indicate a descendant of indigenous people, but who were considered as lacking a particular ethnicity or sense of belonging to a specific social group (Moreira 1988). In other words, this was a social category interpreted as indicative of the process of disintegration of indigenous cultures and ethnicities. In general, in the official history the missionary enterprise has been considered a successful project of assimilation of colonial domination.

Projects of Civilization of Indigenous Peoples

With the definitive expulsion of the Jesuits from Brazilian territory, a new civil regime of control of indigenous labor started. The Directory of Pombal published on February 5, 1757 constituted one of the major changes in indigenous policy in the Amazon region (Ferreira Reis 1931). It proposed a social transformation, in terms that it provided a legal instrument for the project of civilization of the indigenous population. This transformation was envisioned through the total integration of the Indians and *tapuios* into the colonial social and economic systems and values. They constituted the two most important sources of forced labor available in the Amazon. It was also a political project that intended to consolidate and extend the colonial

frontier in the Amazon. The Directory established a series of norms and legal practices that included freedom for all Indians and gave them political functions as judges and village councilors. It favored the entry of non-Indians in Indian villages; encouraged mixed marriage; transformed Jesuit missions into towns and districts (*lugares e vilas*); transferred the temporal authority of missionaries to secular administrators; promote agricultural production, created new taxes; prohibited the use of *Língua geral*, and imposed the use of Portuguese language (Almeida 1997; Moreira 1988). Colonial law forced the Indians to assimilate European values and customs, clothing styles, and the restructuring of Indians groups into individual family units. MacLachlan asserts that the replacement of *Língua geral* by Portuguese was accomplished more by default than by systematic teaching. This was because the project of establishing schools to teach the Indians the Portuguese language could not be totally accomplished given the lack of qualified instructors available in the Amazon (MacLachlan 1972). The freedom from the mission system, in practice, did not free Indians from the labor load. The majority of colonists were men more interested in survival and economic gain, increasing the abuses of indigenous labor. Directors exercised more pressure to profit from Indian work, a situation that motivated Indians to desert from villages. The effects of the Directorate were one of the most devastating indigenous policies that ruled over indigenous cultures and lives. The provisions contained in the document created protest from Portuguese colonists that did not want to accept many of the abrupt changes (Ferreira Reis 1931).

In the analysis by MacLachlan (1972) on acculturation of Amazonian Indians enforced by the Directorate, the author promotes the idea that the type of socio-cultural structures of Amazonian Indians facilitated the process of acculturation and the loss of indigenous cultures and identities. In his view, this characteristic generated difficulties in the implementation of the

Directorate. He explains that in dealing with Amazonian Indians, Portuguese colonists relied on their previous experience with coastal Indian patterns of social organization (he described an Indian village governed by a chief assisted by leading warriors and elders, a system which was easy to control). The author explains that Indigenous populations from Amazonia presented a very different form of socio-political organization, which he described as being divided into sibs, which made it impossible to establish contact with any sort of political structure. In other words, he considers that the lack of political structure to made it difficult to incorporate Indian chiefs into the structure of colonial government to comply with the tasks delegated by the Directorate. The absence of political structure was due to the “primitive subsistence economy of the Amazon basin which did not require a high degree of social organization”. Thus, according to the author, the failure to recognize this difference led to enforced acculturation. On one hand, by assuming the existence of a political structure, the government undermined the significance of kinship relations and destroyed the most important cohesive element of Amazonian society. On the other hand, as the author emphasized that the supposedly “fragile structure of Indian society was devastated under the impact of Directorate” (MacLachlan 1972:381-2).

In this analysis then, persisted ideas of fragility, fixity, and wilderness of Amazonian society and nature that impeded the visualization of other ways of maintaining and reconstructing any form of indigenous identities. The analysis also envisioned only one way of acculturation. It refers only the process of assimilation of indigenous population into European culture and values. Although it is recognized that Europeans assimilated some of the indigenous customs, this is conceived only as a way to secure survival and the establishment of European colonial power over indigenous cultures. The author clearly expressed this when he asserted that “the adoption of Indian customs by Europeans was more a question of adaptation to the

environment that a degeneration of European values” (MacLachlan 1972:371), a process considered to have served the extinction of indigenous societies.

A similar analysis can be found in the writing of the historian Adolfo de Varnhagen in the middle of 19th century, who asserted that the truth about the “absolute disappearance” of Indians was the ability of Europeans colonizers to absorb and amalgamate Indian culture (Varnhagen 1962 [1906]). This means the ability to learn from Indians the skills to survive in the New World, as well as the courage to mix with them, a practice that in the end helped Europeans to spread out into the region and Indians to improve their racial position. This kind of historical representation not only promoted the idea of the superiority of European civilization over non-Western societies, but also that indigenous cultures were condemned to disappear in this process of interactions. Varnhagen was not only the official historian of the Brazilian empire, but also has been considered the founder of the History of Brazil (Reis 1999). The writing of Varnhagen appeared during a critical point in history since it represents the beginning of new republic, the political independence of Brazil, and the formation of a new national identity founded under the idea of racial supremacy of European heritage. According to Gomes (2000), he was also the promoter of the landholder’s economic and political reforms, which intended to institutionalize private property on indigenous territories. This situation made his arguments very purposive regarding the fate of indigenous peoples: they were condemned to extinction. The writing of Varnhagen was crucial to consolidation and legitimization of the new Brazilian Empire. The history of Brazil, he wrote intended to justify the power exercised by Portuguese colonists over indigenous population, their control and subjugation in order to establish and defend the rights of local elites.

Cultural and Racial Mixture

The consolidation of the Brazilian empire was also expected to be accomplished through the production of a history that emphasized European heritage in the project of building the new nation and in the formation of the Brazilian national identity. In Varnhagen's description of the relationships between Portuguese colonists and Indians the cultural mixing process is stressed, but as a way to prove the superiority of European civilization and the gradual disappearance of indigenous people. Historian José C. Reis summarizes Varnhagen's idea of an official history that stressed the uniqueness, unity, and racial particularity of the new nation (Reis, 1999:34):

The white people possess what is needed to build a nation. The defeated deserve to be excluded, slaved, repressed and assimilated through miscegenation; that is, racial and cultural whitening. The Portuguese conquest was accomplished through war and blood. Given that the Portuguese triumphed, the indigenous land will be legitimately Portuguese.

This is a history that created the notion of Brazilian society as emerging from a non-conflicting and non-excluding historical practice of cultural and racial mixture, but in which the idea of the supremacy of Whites was maintained. In this mixing practice, Indian society had only the option of assimilating into the dominant White society. The model of cultural mixture, then, became the symbol that represented national identity and promoted the idea of Brazil as an example of racial tolerance (Ramos 1998; Rocha 2003).

In other words, this official historical writing explained that the intensive interethnic contact enforced not only conditions of friction and change -through relations of domination and submission-but also the formation of a new ethnic entity-i. g. cultural mixture. This cultural mixture is interpreted as encompassing ideas of sameness/difference and exclusion/inclusion with the dominant society, condition that is conceived by many as marks of acculturation, integration, and extinction of distinctive cultural and ethnic identities (Ribeiro 1996; Moreira, 1988; Parker 1989; Wagley 1976 [1953]). This type of conception does not consider the

possibility of adjusting identities to new conditions, and the rise of new forms of expressions and meanings of indigenous ethnicities. It only envisions the loss of all elements that are thought of as characterized by pre-contact social formations as if indigenous cultures were static and unable to change and to resist.

Here, the ideologies that have driven conceptions of indigenusness and particularly the mixing of people also need to be taken into account. Norman Whitten (1996) explains that in the ethnic formation of the New World structures of European domination, there were three main categories of reference, the supremacy of the White or European over the black or African, and the native or Indian. Since the 16th century, these ethnic categories signified the pyramidal segments of society and represented the ongoing process of social and cultural transformation and differentiation. In this hierarchy, those located at the very bottom were the ones ascribed as *mestizo*, or those who represented the racial and cultural mixture of people (Whitten 1996).

Peter Wade asserts that during the formation of new Latin American republics in the middle and late 19th century, Western scientific racism¹⁰ constituted one of the basic conceptual elements in defining the national identities of new independent countries. This scientific racism not only located Indians and blacks at inferior status but also condemned their mixed offspring or *mestizos* as degenerate (Wade 1997).

Although the concept of mixing became a symbol of national identity in some countries such as Mexico and Colombia, and Brazil, its base was oriented towards a process of whitening. That is the process of becoming increasingly similar and acceptable to the standards of White-European ideal. Thus, the enforced mixing of population was conceived as a way of elimination

¹⁰ Wade explains that in the 19th century “races were thought to be permanent, separable types of human beings with innate qualities that were passed on from one generation to the next...Racial types were hierarchical ordered in terms of innate differences of biology” (Wade 1997:10).

of Indians and Blacks, leading to the consolidation of a mixed society that would become whiter in the long term (Wade 1997). That is the case of Brazil, where as a way to accelerate the whitening process of the mixed population, the immigration of Europeans during the second half of 19th century was promoted (Rocha 2003). Saldaña-Portillo asserts that in the aftermath of Mexico's 1910 revolution, *mestizaje* was fully ensconced as principle of citizenship. Mexican intellectuals promoted the concept of *mestizaje* as the basis of revolutionary education, in which *mestizaje* would constitute a "universal race, which will bring together the best qualities of the four great races, black, white, yellow and red" (2001:405). Since Indians were considered the cause of failure of national cultures to congeal in Latin America, Mexican indigenist policy was oriented to modernize the Indians integrating indigenous populations into *mestizo* life. Politicians believed that this integration could be achieved through education that would help to preserve the positive elements of indigenous cultures while eliminating the negative. While enhancing the value of *mestizaje* as integration of different races, the indigenous aspects of the *mestizos* were defined as a past condition of the Mexican citizenship (Saldaña-Portillo 2001). Peter Wade has also argues that studies concerning cultural mixture –*mestizaje*- have tended to privilege two assumptions. One is that nationalist ideology of *mestizaje* is primarily about the creation of a homogeneous *mestizo*, an idea that goes in contradiction to the cultural and racial diversity of nations. The second is that the conception of *mestizaje* as a nationalist ideology is represented as an inclusive process, when in practice it is exclusive because it marginalizes certain groups of society, such as Black and Indians, while valuing whiteness (Wade 2005). This leading notion promotes the idea that in the mixing and whitening processes any sense of indigenous identities was completely erased.

In analysis of continuity, change, culture, and identity Guillaume Boccara (2003) suggests the need to abandon simple arguments based on dichotomies such as modernity-tradition, westernization-nativism, and acculturation-resistant. The author asserts that this is especially important when we are rethinking sociohistorical processes concerning the mixing of people. As Boccara points out, the paradox around *mestizaje* as an indicative of discontinuity or alteration of indigenous culture relies on the very concept of change. Although *mestizaje* brings to mind the idea of change, it is this process of transformation that precisely can shed light on its persistence. According to the author, the colonial conditions that opened space for *mestizaje* need to be “rethought not in terms of simple oppositions such as resistance/acculturation” but on the basis of a more open idea such as mixture¹¹ (Boccara 2003:74). The authors suggest then that mixture would help us to understand the shared means and ways through which people re-defined their collective and individual cultural identities and properties. This in turn will give to indigenous people a more active role in the re-definition of their identities and the establishment of new forms of relationships with colonial or state powers. We need thus to question understandings of interethnic relation between indigenous people and colonial and state powers that emphasize a linear model in which it is anticipated that Indians would renounce their ethnic identities as they accommodate to new conditions and accept citizenship within nations (Hill, 1996).

Thus, in terms of the existing historiography about many Amazonian indigenous groups such as the Arapium people, their presence or absence from history has highly depended on official explanations that left unquestioned dominant conceptions of cultural assimilation. These projects of assimilation helps to negate the lived experience and knowledge of those being

¹¹ Peter Wade asserts that the *mestizaje* has not only gained increased attention but has come to be referred to by a series of different terms such as hybridity and mixture, which are considered to have positive connotations of being able to break with essentialist ideas of identity and rigid categorization (2005).

subject to analysis. Those many individuals who are “remnants” of former ethnic groups or those considered to be the product of well articulated projects of indigenous acculturation such as the *tapuio*, *mestizo* or *caboclo* were “condemned” to become agricultural laborers, miners, and so on. In general, they are conceived of as deprived of their traditions but without the chance to fully participate in the dominant socio-cultural and economic system. They are conceived of being born from past events predominantly oriented or dominated by the presumed superiority of the colonizer. These historical explanations also located them in a kind of different stage of the social categorization. That is, they were not seen, as the “original” Indians encountered by first colonizers, but as a new “constructed” social category created by the imperial cultural power. A social category that was expected to culminate, through several stages of oriented change, in the project of integration into the wider society. But, what happens when in this process of assimilation the same groups considered as the “representatives” of this accomplished task start to reverse the presumed achievements? In other words, how is it possible that people considered to have lost their historical connection with an Indian past start again to see themselves as Indians? And more important, what happens when they re-emerge as members of an ethnic group supposedly extinct, or when they create a new one? I explore these questions in the next section. To do that, I concentrate in the case of the Arapium people by reviewing the scarce colonial historical written information about them, and the historical conditions that contributed to their presence and disappearance from official written history. I analyze how historical views that served to sustain conceptions and projects of enforced assimilation of indigenous groups into the national societies are challenged by the contemporary rise of supposedly assimilated or extinct indigenous populations.

Arapium Indians: Their Discontinuity and Continuity in History

The indigenous Arapium, as many other groups of the Amazon region, suffer from the implications of a written history that creates a notion of them as “a past or dead culture.” That is, whether by the fact of conquest’s demographic depopulation--due to battles of extinction, diseases, and enslavement--evangelization, and long processes of cultural assimilation the Arapium people came to be seen as one of the Amazonian groups that did not resist the cruel effects of European colonization. Furthermore, unlike other indigenous groups that are very well known in the existing historical record about long processes of contact with and resistance to Portuguese domination, the Arapium group was scarcely mentioned in the colonial written history.

Of the scarce and incomplete information about this group, it is known that the Arapium were *descidos* (forced to move), detribalized, and gathered at the *aldeia* of *Nossa Senhora da Asunção dos Arapiuns* by Jesuit Manuel Rebelo at the beginning of the 18th century (Leite, 1943). This mission changed its name to Camaru and later to Vila Franca when the mission was elevated to the category of municipality in 1758 as ordered by the Directorate policy. The only concrete colonial ethnographic record is found in the book of João Daniel (2004 [1841])¹², a Jesuit of the *Companhia de Jesus*, who lived in the Amazon region between 1741 and 1757. In the second part of the first volume of his book, João Daniel presented short descriptions of different indigenous groups living in the Jesuit missions of the Amazon region. Here he presented a short report about indigenous Arapium cultural traditions while they were gathered in the Jesuits mission of Vila Franca, in which according to him they were already living for

¹² The “*Tesouro Descoberto do Maximo Rio Amazonas*” is considered the most complete ethnography produced during the colonial time about the social, cultural, political and economic characteristics of the Amazon region and its people.

many years. He described costumes such as the celebration of the first day of new moon, preservation of bones of death relatives and pulverization of them for drinking purposes during festivities, ritual for girls' first menstruation, marriage negotiation, and demonstration of courage of young men before marriage. The Jesuits affirmed that the Arapium people were good Catholics, despite their ancient practice of eating their own death relatives (Daniel, 2004 [1841])

The Arapium are also mentioned by Serafim Leite as one of the four indigenous nations integrating the Aldeia dos Tapajós in 1678 (today Santarém). In addition, he indicated that in the year of 1730 there were 1069 Indians in *the aldeia de Nossa Senhora da conceição dos Arapiuns* of Vila Franca (Leite 1943). In the classical "Handbook of South American Indians" Curt Nimuendajú provided a short description of them suggesting that although the Arapium were once considered to be the same as the indigenous Maué, he believed they were most likely an offshoot of the Tapajós indigenous group (Nimuendaju, 1963). In his exploration to the Arapiuns River in 1924, the author reported that he found Indians dwelling and ceramic remains similar to those of the indigenous Tapajós. Also in his report about the Tapajós he mentioned the transfer of several indigenous groups-Tapajós, Comandys, Goanacuás, Marxagoaras, Apuatiás, Aracupús, Andiragoaris-to the mission of the indigenous Arapium in 1698 by priest Manoel Rebello, in order to protect them from the abuse of Portuguese colonists (Nimuendaju, 1948). It should be noticed that the current indigenous Arapium do not recognize themselves as being part of Tapajós or Maué groups.

According to Nimuendaju (1963), the indigenous Arapium were last mentioned in 1762, which is 5 years after the establishment of the Directory of Pombal (*Directório dos índios*) the indigenist policy promulgated in 1757 by the Portuguese colonial power. It also should be noticed that this date is only a few years after the expulsion of the Jesuits from Brazil, a situation

that generated the collapse of the majority of missions established in the Amazon region and led many indigenous people to run away into the forest. After that year, there is no additional written record about the Arapium people, which has been considered to be a result of cultural disappearance. This is what Gomes suggests in his analysis of the effects of the Directory of Pombal and expulsion of Jesuits from Brazilian territory, on Amazonian indigenous groups. He asserts the expulsion of Jesuits from Brazil as well as the promotion of physical and cultural miscegenation of Indians constituted a “hypocritically peaceful way” to eliminate Indians as *nations* or as autonomous ethnic groups” (Gomes 2000:68). Forms of “official” declaration of indigenous groups’ extinction through decree have been experienced in other parts of the Americas. For example, the Narragansett Indian of Rhode Island in United States, were officially declared extinct in the last half of the 19th century through a policy of the federal government, which ended tribal ownership of land on reservations and established privately owned allotment for individuals. Individuals living off their reservation were not defined as Indians, but with the generic term “colored” people. This policy towards reservation tribes was based on the idea that reservation life prevented Indians to become integrated to American society. However, since 1930 through a pan-Indian movement the Narragansett initiated a process of indigenous identity re-construction and land claims (Robinson 1994).

In subsequent reports on Amazonian indigenous population during the early formation of the Brazilian republic and contemporary nation state, there is no information about the existence of the Arapium people¹³. They are not even mentioned, neither as extinct nor as integrated, in Ribeiro’s table about the levels of integration of indigenous groups into Brazilian society (1996).

¹³ See for example reports of naturalists, who visit the region during 18th and 19th centuries such as Alexandre Rodriguez Ferreira (Ferreira 1971), Henry W. Bates (1962 [1864]), Henri Coudreau (1897), Martiux and Spix (1972), and João Barbosa Rodrigues (1875), who did not report any information about the Arapium people or assumed them as extinct.

Also in Gomes' list of "survival Indians" or those groups who lasted until the 20th century either as acculturated or as autonomous ethnic groups living apart from the dominant system, the Arapium people are not mentioned (Gomes, 2000). In any case, their absence from official history tends to inhibit the idea of the Arapium people as a persisting distinctive indigenous ethnicity.

As I suggested before, this situation calls attention to the role and uses of official written history as the only valid reference regarding the reports of past events on indigenous peoples' cultures. Historical documents also require a critical look and analysis of their limitations and scope, the dominant ideological paradigms that orient their discourses to legitimate or deny, and the reasons for the presence and absence of certain indigenous groups. This is more important since in many of the governmental correspondence between officials and colonial power names of indigenous groups were rarely mentioned. Instead, the generic term "*indios*" was commonly used even if the population reported belonged to different ethnicities. For example, in the archival research I did at the public Archive of Pará in the city of Belém, about correspondence Santarem and Vila Franca and the *Capitania of Grao Pará* during the period 1757-1777, there was no mention of the name of the indigenous groups gathered there. They were referred as "*indios*" meaning Christianized Indians (Public Archive of Pará 1757-1777). Even João Daniel in his description of the different indigenous groups sometimes referred to them by their own ethnic name and sometimes named them as "tapuias" (Daniel 4004 [1841]). In the statistical report by Ferreira Pena (1869) about the "the west region of the Province of Para *comarcas* of Obidos and Santarém" a description of population of the municipality of Santarém which included the village of Vila Franca is presented. For Santarém, a population of 1761 people were classified according to eleven categories in which the term *indio* was not even used. Instead, the

author used two other categories for the population, such as “*livres-free-*” and “*escravos-slaves-*” which do not allow for a clear distinction between free non-Indians and free Indians or black and Indian slaves. The same occurs for the information provided about Vila Franca, in which a population of 143 people was classified just as women, men, adult female and male slaves, young female and male slaves (Penna, 1869). The way the information is provided promoted the idea that the indigenous distinctive ethnicities were completely erased. This idea of presumed disappearance did not take into account how racial hegemonic ideologies that tended to negate the Indian as part of the national society influenced historical reports on indigenous population. It simply assumes that those hegemonic ideologies of incorporation of Indians into national societies through a new and redefined social identity.

In Amazon Brazil, one of the critical historical events that account for the extermination of many Indians and black descendants and the accentuation of the anti-Indian sentiment of the White Portuguese elites, was the *Cabanagem*. The *Cabanagem* was a social and political rebellion against the Imperial government that exploded after the independence of Brazil. It affected most of the Amazonian region from Belém to the margins of the Negro River. Considered one of the most devastating civil wars of northern Brazil during 1835-1841, the *Cabanagem* caused one of the major genocides against Indian, Blacks slaves, *tapuios* and *Mestizos* populations (Cleary 1998; Moreira 1988). The period of the Brazilian empire was characterized by the maintenance of slavery and the legitimization of large Portuguese colonists' property and government power. It also denied the political autonomy of the Brazilian-born elite, the emergence of small property holders, and the rise of democratic spirit. The *Cabanagem* originated against the power maintained by the Portuguese-born elite. The *Cabanos* who in majority were *tapuios* constituted the most important labor-force available that worked as small

farm laborers or fishers, lived in *cabanos* (huts) and worked under exploitative conditions for the Portuguese and Brazilian elites (Di Paolo 1990). *Tapuios*, Black slaves, and their mixed offspring as the most oppressed groups of society participated in the rebellion that promised a change in the social and economic discrimination and exclusion. According to Cleary (1998), race was a key component of the social structure of the *Cabanagem*. He asserts that although it did not begin as a race war, it rapidly became one. The white elites perceived the rebellion as an uprising of colored people against the Portuguese, a situation that made all people categorized as non-White suspect of insurgence. The imperial military response to the rebellion implemented hard measures against the *cabanos* that in general intended the extermination of all of those considered of suspicious. Skin color and physical appearance constituted marks of identification as *cabano*. According to Moreira (1988), the mass participation of *tapuios* in the *Cabanagem* was the result of their lack of integration into the national society and the tense relationship between the dominant white and Indian societies. In this sense, *tapuio* became synonym of *cabano*, which made their integration even more difficult and intensified their social and economic segregation. The principal military figure of the process of extermination and recovery of control of the region, Marshal Francisco José de Andrea, represented the racial and anti-Indian ideology prevalent during the 19th century (Moreira 1988). Moreira asserts that Andrea, like the historian Varnhagen, shared the idea that Indians and people of color in general were undesirables in the formation of national society and identity and considered them as a threat to White hegemony.

In the area of the lower Tapajós the impacts of the military response to the *Cabanagem* become even worse. Besides falling after the struggle against imperial military force in 1836, participants and leaders of the rebellion were persecuted or slaughtered. Their situation became

worse because it coincided with a regional conflict generated by the expansion of Mundurucu Indians into the region. The indigenous Mundurucú, who became allies of the royal forces after a long process of pacification, participated actively in the campaign against the *Cabanos*. The naturalist Henry Bates who visited the Tapajos region in 1851 reported the case of a Mundurucu Indian that “was rewarded with a commission in the Brazilian army, in acknowledgement of the assistance he gave to the legal authorities during the rebellion of 1835-6” (Bates, 1962 [1864]:274). After the Mundurucu made peace in 1795, they became allies of the Portuguese in the war against the Mura, the primary rivals of the Mundurucu Indians. The Mura on their side became allies of the *cabano* rebels (Santos 2002). The excesses committed against the Indians and Blacks that participated in the rebellion were so brutal that they are still part of the collective memory of many people in the lower region of the Tapajós and Arapiuns Rivers. David Cleary (1998) asserts that the overall effect of the *cabanagem* was the reinforcement of a primordial scheme of racial differentiation that originated at the very beginning of European colonization. This was then a schema of classification in which individuals had ascribed racial identities either as Indians, Blacks, or mixed. In other words, this schema means that those categorized as non-White were considered as non-trustworthy and were seen as separated from the superiority of the White. The author also asserts that a great deal of importance of the *Cabanagem* lies in the fact that it makes visible an Indian population neglected by official history (Cleary 1998).

This is, then, the social and political context, in which the disappearance of Arapium people from official history is situated. Besides the poor information on Amazonian indigenous groups during these years, the events that marked processes of detribalization, the enforced detachment from social and cultural indigenous organizations, and the lack of mention of Arapium as a surviving ethnic group reinforced and justified the notion of their extinction.

Invisibility of indigenous peoples from official record and hegemonic discourse have been conceived and used as a proof of their disappearance. This is what Gordillo and Hirsch (2003) argue in the case of the constitution of the Argentina as a nation-state in the late 19th century, which was based on the systematic attempt to eliminate, silence, or assimilate its Indian population. The authors assert that dominant discourse depicted the Indians not only as a wild and destructive force that impeded the development of the nation, but also as a “problem that has been for the most part militarily solved in Argentinian territory” (2003:10). For decades, national education programs emphasized the European cultural heritage of Argentinian citizens and reproduced the idea that indigenous groups were no longer part of the national territory. These ideas, the authors argue, created a hegemonic invisibilization of the indigenous question in the national imaginations that has been confronted by the very fact of existence of a non-recognized social subject, the Indian, that was nevertheless out there as a latent point of reference in hegemonic narratives. The invisibilization of indigenous groups did not totally erase them from national imaginings. This process had deep effects on indigenous peoples’ struggles that rose in Argentina with particular force during the 1980s. The authors assert that the rise of indigenous peoples’ struggles implies on one hand, a “critical engagement with the narratives that constitute them as social subject” and on the other hand, “an attempt to undermine invisibility not just by becoming visible but by gaining state recognition” (Gordillo and Hirsch 2003:5).

After 239 years from the last date the Arapium were mentioned in the historical record, 15 communities located in the Arapium River (the area that official history has determined as the ancestral land of this indigenous group) have asserted Arapium indigenous identity. This constitutes a critical geographical region since in the historical record the area is conceived as one of those highly affected by processes of devastation and assimilation of indigenous

populations. The assertion of their identity is not only to say that they had not in fact vanished, and consequently had become visible to national society, but also to claim and gain state recognition as a distinctive indigenous ethnicity, and the rights attached to this status. I introduce in this last section, a general context in which the Arapium people have become visible again.

Reversing the Fate: Restoring the Arapium Ethnic Indigenous Identity

The claim of the Arapium indigenous identity is not an isolated case in the context of the national ethno-politics. The Arapium people became visible as members of a regional and national indigenous movement that supports the cultural, political and social struggle of people of mixed descent that in different part of the Brazilian territory are claiming the recognition of indigenous status and rights. Their visibility is also related to a contemporary trend of rapid growth of indigenous population throughout Latin American.

Changes in population growth of Latin American indigenous people have led to an increasing interest in critical analysis about the reasons behind this trend. In particular it has highlighted the “demographic turnaround” (as Mercio Gomez has described it) of tropical lowland indigenous groups considering their relatively recent post-contact depopulation (Gomes 2000; Gordillo and Hirsch 2003; McSweeney and Arps 2005). In this notable increase of lowland indigenous population are counted not only groups considered on the verge of extinction, but also those that were thought extinct many years or centuries ago and others about whom nobody has heard before¹⁴. Whether demographic recovery is the result of better health conditions, high fertility, falling child mortality rates, new marriage strategies, or cultural and

¹⁴ For example, Warren reported that “several new Indian people (e.g. Xacrabíá, Tupinikim, Kaxixó, and Arana) have emerged since the 1970s in Eastern Brazil, and others in extinction such as the Pataxó have experienced rapid population increase (2001:12). See also Gordillo and Hirsch who document the re-mergence of supposedly extinct indigenous groups such as the Ranquel, the Auarpes and Selk’am in Argentina (2003).

political strengthening, analysis addressing this remarkable growth suggest the need to include issues related to indigenous ethno-political agendas and the new international and national legislations favoring indigenous peoples (McSweeney and Arps 2005; Niezen 2003; Oliveira 2000; Warren 1998).

In this particular context, claims for recognition of indigenous groups considered extinct have motivated questions about their authenticity, especially when it is believed that they have lost many of the traditional markers that would distinguish them as Indians. In this regard, conceptions of indigenusness that emphasized essentialist definitions such as unbroken genealogical descent, historical continuity, and linguistic distinction to determine who is indigenous posit contentious arguments against those groups currently struggling for legal recognition as indigenous people. This is more controversial as many of these indigenous groups have maintained long-term relationships with Western society and have been interacting with the market economy as rural workers or petty commodity producers, which apparently makes them barely differentiated from other non-indigenous people (Gordillo and Hirsch 2003; Occhipinti 2003). This is the case of indigenous Wichi from Argentina, to whom the government formally recognized the rights to their lands in 1997. However, critics of the land claims question their indigenusness based on their presumed acculturation, absence of indigenous language, lack of traditional kinship arrangements, and their migration pattern for wage-labor (Occhipinti 2003). The Mapuche of southern Chile have also been questioned because of their large population, extensive agricultural development even before the arrival of Spaniards, and their political strength (Coates 2004). The Snohomish and Samish of western Washington state in the USA were not recognized by the federal government as Indians because they did not have the presumed characteristics necessary for acknowledgement of their Indian ancestry (Bruce 2003).

All these cases direct attention towards their assumed extinction as ethnic groups and the lost of major cultural heritage, such as language, religion, and traditional social-political organization. For many, what indigenous identity claims mean is the recognition of a long history of resistance to conditions of oppression and exclusion.

The indigenous groups from the northeast and central north Amazon region of Brazil are considered to be in an advanced stage of acculturation. However, they have initiated a process of ethnic identity re-affirmation, demanding a more active and inclusive form of political participation. To claim their rights, they are organized through local organizations and articulate with regional and national indigenous organizations such as *Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira*, COIAB. For example, the *Conselho Indígena Tapajós-Arapiuns*, CITA is the organization which politically represents the interests of the 12¹⁵ mixed indigenous groups of the region claiming legal recognition and territorial rights. A way to express and legitimize their historical presence, the concept of “*Índios resistentes*” (Resistant Indians) has been used by culturally mixed indigenous groups in their political movements. It means that, they as Indians were always present in history resisting processes of assimilation that took away their own culture and that now they have regained conscious of their indigeness. Or as an indigenous from CITA described: “We were always here, resisting, and hiding our culture and identity; a resistant Indian is a conscious Indian who is proud of his identity.” They are actively participating in regional and national meetings that congregate indigenous groups in Brazil. In the first encounter of *índios resistentes* that took place in Pernambuco in 2004, the governmental decision to apply Convention 169 in order to establish legal recognition by the

¹⁵ The ethnic groups are Mundurucu, Maitapú, Cara Preta, Borari, Tupinambá, Arapium, Arara Vermelha, Camaruara, Jaraqui, Tapajó, Apiaká, and Tapuia. All of them are settled in the municipalities of Aveiro, Belterra and Santarém and lower Tapajós and Arapiuns Rivers.

National Indian Foundation, FUNAI was announced (CIMI 2004). Previous to this decision, for a group to gain recognition an anthropological study was required to prove indigenous descent. The new decision gave legitimacy to the act of self-identification as the fundamental condition to obtain legal recognition by the government. The application of the Convention is presumed to benefit mixed indigenous peoples' claims, including those related to land demarcation. Indigenous rights over land constitute one of the major objectives of the political movement of "*Indios resistentes*." According to Mercio Gomes (2000), the "ethnic awakening" came as a response to the intensification of the expansion of the Brazilian economy and society into indigenous people's lands. This condition motivated many mixed indigenous people to organize and struggle for the defense or recovery of lands that were taken from them.

I consider that many of the concerns about the claiming of indigenous identity by people of mixed descent emerge from the economic and political implications of this claim. These concerns relate to the application of the special rights determined for indigenous peoples, and the titling and management of their homelands. These kinds of concerns have stressed instrumentalist understandings of the re-emergent indigenous people as if these groups were mainly the mere result of a strategic decision to choose a particular Indian identity to gain the benefits that it may represent. As many examples in the Americas show, indigenous people's land claims constitute a political action to contest the state and other sectors of society in control of or with interests in the management of valuable natural resources of indigenous lands.

Anthony Stocks (2005) analyzes the changes in the constitutional and legislative framework under which indigenous land claims in Latin America are based and the way policy makers interpret and apply indigenous land rights. His analysis illustrates the kind of difficulties encountered in trying to implement these policies. At the front are the economic bases of many

of the arguments against the application of indigenous land rights. As he points out, if indigenous lands did not contain valuable natural resources, the application of indigenous legislation and titling of lands would be easy to resolve. He also points out how changes in legal frameworks open new doors for indigenous peoples to contest the state. The non-indigenous sectors have also been empowered to contest indigenous claims, jeopardizing land titling (Stocks 2005). In the next chapter, the analysis of the formation of the indigenous movement of the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns region is presented. I particularly address how people that suffered a process of historical discontinuity as ethnic groups construct their identity in contemporary times. Their claim for recognition is accompanied with claim for demarcation of their lands.

Conclusions

I have explored through this chapter, the conception of indigenous people primarily as an ascribed identity. That is, the process of formation of ideas and perceptions applied to Amerindian population that emerged from 16th century European thought about foreign cultures. These were notions primarily ascribed by Europeans to Indian populations and were based in a racial hierarchy that located indigenous people at the bottom of the scale. In sum, an indigenous conception was shaped by colonial power models. This at the same time constituted the basis of the power relationship that developed since the colonial time between the colonizer and the Indians, in which the superiority of the European-White culture was presumed. I have recalled how this conception helped to anticipate the unidirectional result of this relationship, the inevitable assimilation of indigenous people to the dominant society. That is, in the ongoing process of interaction, the indigenous population is envisioned only as a subordinated subject not capable of re-constructing their own identities and history. I have also brought into account the implications of writing official history that generate and reproduce certain interpretations of historical events and the people involved on them. In special, I have recalled how it contributed

not only to blur the role indigenous population played in the changing process of interactions and identity construction, but also to understand the fate of indigenous people mainly from the perspective of colonial, imperial, or elite interests. This history presents the mixed population as socio-cultural formations departing only from European models and justifies cultural mixing as a form of disintegration of indigenous identities.

Official history can tell us very little about who the Arapium people were during the period preceding the time of disappearance from official record. Official history provides information on a series of events that explain the projects and processes of assimilation and mixing of Indian population, which has served as the basis of interpretation of who is indigenous. It locates in a dubious position those people considered to have passed through all the stages of acculturation and assimilation. Although this historical panorama produced a base for official understanding of the disappearance of the Arapium as a distinctive ethnic identity, it does not explain why many people through history continue holding the generic Indian identity (whether ascribed or asserted). If the presumed ideal end of the process of assimilation is the rejection and loss of Indian identity and cultural heritage, then the reversal currently being experienced with claims for recognition of indigenous identity questions established historical explanations of the disappearance of ethnic indigenous groups. This reversal also questions understanding of indigenous cultural change as a mere form of extinction, and calls one to think of change as the re-constitution of indigenous identity.

CHAPTER 3 FORMATION OF THE REGIONAL INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT

In chapter 3 and 4, I examine how people of the lower Tapajós and Arapiuns region construct the conceptions and the meanings of being Indian. How people have come to see themselves as indigenous, act according to that perception, and how this identity brought people together around specific ethnicities. I describe the way people from the CITA organization (*Conselho Indígena Tapajós-Arapiuns* in Portuguese), *Cobra Grande* indigenous territory, and in particular, people from Caruci and Lago da Praia communities conceptualize their sense of indigeness. I specifically examine the re-construction of Arapium and the creation of Jaraqui ethnic identities. To do this, I highlight the events and the historical, symbolic, and material sources that helped people to construct and express their identities. I also develop an analysis of the cultural and political meanings of being indigenous and the way people's relationships with the land constitute a critical element in this process of construction of ethnic indigenous identities.

Chapter 3 focuses primarily on the socio-political context and dynamics that contribute to the formation of the regional indigenous movement. I explore the relationships and alliances between local and regional indigenous councils, CITA, the GCI (*Grupo Conciencia Indígena* in Portuguese) and COINTECOG (*Conselho Indígena da Terra Cobra Grande* in Portuguese) organizations. The analysis presented here was primarily drawn from oral histories and semi-structured interviews carried out during the different periods of my field research. To achieve my intent, I started by examining first some of the narratives that were shared by different ethnic indigenous groups belonging to GCI and CITA organizations including those of Arapium ethnicity. With these narratives, I do not intend to represent a historical truth of the subjects, but, instead, an account of what and how I heard about people's perceptions of what it means to be

indigenous people. To do this, I selected and presented parts of the narratives through which I developed an analysis of the different factors and contexts that intersect with people's stories. I complement the analysis with a review of the role of anthropology and anthropologist in indigenous peoples' struggles for recognition and land rights. What are the social responsibilities and political roles of anthropology and anthropologists? This is necessary because in this case, the formation of the indigenous movement is alleged to be motivated by a local anthropologist who has played a crucial role in the articulation of indigenous peoples' claims. However, the most critical aspect to consider in the analysis of what anthropologists may contribute in this case is the position of the anthropologist in the scenario of the indigenous movement. I refer to the condition of being native not only as what been defined as "native or national anthropologist," (Krotz 1997; Ribeiro 2006), but also the involvement of an anthropologist and a religious leader who recognizes himself as belonging to the same indigenous movement.

Dilemmas Associated with the Emergence of the Indigenous Movement

On June 21, 2004, I met for the first time the members of the GCI, the indigenous NGO supporting the process of organization and political structure of CITA. They were also undertaking activities at the community level to help raise indigenous consciousness among the communities of the lower Tapajós and Arapiuns rivers, and provided information about indigenous rights. The first person I met was Florêncio Vaz, the indigenous anthropologist and founder and head leader of GCI and also a very well recognized religious leader in the region and in his home community, Pinhel on the Tapajós River. From the very beginning of my field research, even before I met him, his name became critical when one talked about the formation and dynamic of the indigenous movement in the region. Besides being a regional leader, Florêncio has become the referent (either in positive or negative terms) for the revival of

indigenous identity in the lower Tapajós and Arapiuns area, a situation that has made many see him as either a great ally or rival in the process of supporting or contesting the indigenous status and land tenure claims. Other anthropologists and researchers working in the area told me that he was not only the head of the indigenous movement, but also the person who created a lot of confusion in the region regarding the revival of indigenous identity.

My interest in meeting Florêncio increased as I heard many positive and negative comments about his role within the indigenous movement. I was particularly curious since he was going to be my liaison person to be introduced to the indigenous organization. I found myself fascinated as well as concerned when thinking of establishing a relationship with him. On one hand, I thought that the fact of Florêncio being an indigenous anthropologist from the research site of my interest would facilitate the understanding of the reality experienced by the indigenous movement. To a certain extent, this was the case of my interaction with him. On the other hand, what most concerned me was to get acceptance as a foreigner anthropologist educated in the United States and the way I should manage the “moral and professional authority” he had in the region as a member of the Catholic Church, especially if we were to disagree in deciding certain issues of my research. The very fact of being Colombian helped me to overcome this concern. For Florêncio and the other members of the CITA, I was a “Latina,” an identity that constitutes a great deal of what I am, particularly in the context of United States. In most of the meetings with the different people and communities, they expressed the same phrase “Ah! She is Latina like us” when I located my place of origin in a map. This was particularly stressed by Florêncio because, as a Franciscan, he had done missionary work in Colombia. In general my experience proven to be satisfying and without major conflicts even when we disagreed in the way of planning and doing things. We did not work together although from time to time, we got

together to share ideas, experiences, and propose future actions for the indigenous movement. The respect he has gained in the region came mostly for his work as a Franciscan and as a member of the GCI rather than as anthropologist. More than an academic intellectual sympathetic to the indigenous movement, the indigenous organization envisioned him as one of their members.

His field research about *ribeirinho* communities in the area of the lower Tapajós during 1995-6 (Vaz, 1997) is considered by different NGOs and environmental organizations as the starting point of the process of reconstitution of indigenous identity in the region. In his masters' thesis, he asserts that *ribeirinho* or *caboclo* communities of the Tapajós region cannot be considered as such, but as indigenous people. He asserts this explaining that in the region, people do not self-identify either as *caboclo*, or as *ribeirinho*. Nor do they accept the pejorative connotation of the term “*índio*.” The population of the region maintained many traditions that are of indigenous origin. In this sense, he proposed that the term *caboclo* as category of definition and understanding of lower Amazonian population is not appropriate to maintain. Instead, he proposed the term “*indígenas ribeirinhos*” as the most accurate term to define, from the academic point of view, the Amazonian communities that have maintained historical and cultural continuity with indigenous population that inhabited the region during the Portuguese colonization (Vaz 1997). He concluded that despite the enforced process of detribalization, miscegenation, and adoption of many of cultural values of Western societies, this population did not completely lose their sense of indigeness.

Effects of his work have been echoed and contested. For example, one of the agronomists of the forest reserve Flona Tapajós asserts, “it was as a result of Florêncio's research that a group of people started the articulation of indigenous organizations in Santarém.” According to this

person, before 1998 there was no information about the existence of indigenous groups within the limits of the forest reserve (De Lima 2004:576). A member of IBAMA (Brazilian Institute of Environment and Natural Resources) stated in a conference celebrating 30 years of the creation of the forest reserve Flona Tapajós “Florêncio was the person who “discovered” that the people living in the forest reserve were Indians” (my personal observation). Others have gone further in critiques and put in question the presence and actions of the indigenous movement in the region and the anthropological studies of FUNAI (National Indian Foundation) consultants who provided information for the ethnic recognition of the Mundurucu Indians inhabiting within the forest reserve. The indigenous movement was seen as responsible for causing division within the communities and making the work of the NGOs difficult in the area and the anthropologists working in favor of indigenous peoples’ recognition as providers of dubious anthropological reports on indigenous heritage (Allogio 2004). In other words, because of the involvement in socio-political activism to support the claims of the indigenous movement, the work of the anthropologists, Florencio and FUNAI’s consultants, was defined as biased or lacking “scientific objectivity.”

I want to analyze these discursive reactions to the role of the anthropologist using a quote from James Clifford, who asserts that, “Anthropology no longer speaks with automatic authority for others defined as unable to speak for themselves... and represented as if they were not involved in present word system” (1986:10). This is useful to recall because new socio-historical conditions and postmodern critiques of the authoritarian representation of the Other have pressured anthropology to review its position with respect to its object of study. Anthropology is considered to be a Western discipline that arose as a particular field of social science in the search for an explanation and interpretation of other cultures, which has placed

anthropology as the science of the Other, and the anthropologists as the best interpreter and translator of the life of exotic and unfamiliar peoples and cultures (Krotz 1997; Layton 1997). In the vision of classical anthropology, the anthropologist and the peoples and cultures studied were conceived as part of different worlds separated by time and space. The anthropologist occupying a privileged position of power, provided by the knowledge of science, “objectively” looked at his object of study from an outside standpoint, and later in a written monologue represented and spoke for its object.

Critiques of the discipline generated changes in this privileged subject position of the anthropology’s object and instead, emphasize the collaborative nature of fieldwork that transcend the dichotomy observer-observed and the vision of the field research as a mere place of data collection and its people as simply informants (Clifford and Marcus 1986). As Krotz (1997) asserts, anthropologist meet in their research sites not only informants, but also colleagues, students, indigenous intellectuals, etc., that have a role in, influence the work of the anthropologist, and co-produce anthropological knowledge. Anthropologists have become more involved in the socio-political realities in which research sites and subjects are immersed, not only through the influence that ethnographic writing can have in the political decisions affecting social groups, but also in the political commitment established with their subjects of research (Ramos 1990; Rappaport 2005). Alcida Ramos assert that “No science exists in a social vacuum” and that “There is no purely academic research” (1990:454), which remind us that anthropologists are also socially engaged subjects that articulate diverse point of views in their practice, and speak with others to incorporate their voices in the academic and political settings of their anthropological work. In Latin American in general, since the 1980s the role of anthropology and anthropologists has become increasingly politicized as the question of the

political dimension of the relationship between nation-states and the discipline were the focus of debates. These debates have highlighted the need for a production of scientific knowledge that is not separated from the social reality from which it emerges, and the inclusion of analysis of the characteristics of the scientific community who produced and distribute anthropological knowledge (Krotz 1997; Oliveira 1999/2000; Ribeiro 2006).

In the analysis of the Brazilian ethnographic work, Alcida Ramos (1990) addresses the question of the social responsibility of the anthropologists' actions and writing regarding the peoples we study. The analysis she presented emphasized the difference of the ethnographic work on indigenous peoples developed by Brazilians and foreigner anthropologists, particularly those coming from "hegemonic, central, or north" anthropology as defined by Ribeiro (2006) and Oliveira (1999/2000). That is, either the anthropologists from the United States, France or England. Ramos asserts that whereas foreign anthropologist focus on aspects of social and cultural organizations without reference to the inequality of interethnic relations, Brazilians concentrate on the subject of contact and the implications for the indigenous peoples with an attitude of political commitment to the defense of the rights of the peoples studied (Ramos 1990). She added that a combination of academic duty and the practice of social responsibility are not only frequent, but also expected by the Brazilian anthropological community as a whole. In the field of Indian studies, the political commitment of anthropologists to the cause and rights of indigenous peoples is deeper. Then, in terms of what Florêncio and I represent as anthropologists in the context of indigenous movement, I would argue that is necessary to go beyond the implicit dichotomy native-foreigner anthropologists. First, Florêncio is not only an anthropologist doing studies in his own country; he is an indigenous person claiming legal recognition, a regional leader, and an advocate of indigenous rights, conditions that made his socio-political

commitment even more complex. Second, the links between his professional and personal interests intersect, influence and are influenced by his own origin and relationships he has established at the interior of the indigenous movement. This does not make his work biased or lacking objectivity in his analysis. In accepting this, we would be rejecting the very idea of anthropologist practically and effectively contributing to communities beyond the academia and the collaborative production of knowledge with our subject-object of study. On the other hand, my own position as a foreigner educated in the north academic anthropology, Colombian, and Latina presents further difficulties in viewing the socio-political commitment of anthropologist under the dichotomy foreigner-native. The combination of my practical experience in Colombia with indigenous peoples and my studies in the context of “dominant anthropology” does not reduce my commitment with the indigenous movement. However, in the context of disagreements and disputes about the indigenous movement, I became the anthropologist to be trusted precisely because of my condition as foreigner.

As my research advanced, my relationships with different indigenous peoples, members of CITA, were established, I learned that one cannot think of this indigenous movement just as the result of the ideas and desires of one person. Without denying certain influence that Florêncio had within the indigenous movement, I learned that it was more complex than that. The movement was stemming from social and historical processes and relations of power in which peoples’ indigenous identities became inseparable from the collective struggle that sought to inscribe a more valuable and respectable notion to them as distinctive people. The movement also originated from the need to preserve the rights over the place that they conceived as integral to the production of their past and present history as indigenous peoples. I also learned that this movement does not constitute a homogeneous, singular, and unambiguously defined entity. It

embraced contradictions, controversies, conflicts, and worries that originated from socio-political forces experienced from inside and outside of the movement.

First Encounters

When I met Florêncio in Santarém in 2004, he invited me to a meeting with the GCI team and other representatives of CITA. We then went to the house where GCI and CITA were sharing offices. There I met three other members of GCI, and the secretary and coordinator of CITA. Besides sharing information about the objectives of my research and the communities of Cobra Grande territory, we initiated a conversation about their ethnicities. I learned that people present at the meeting belonged to different indigenous groups: Maytapu, Borary, Mundurucu, and Arapium. Except for Florêncio and the coordinator of CITA, the majority of them were very young, between 17 and 28. They started talking about the reasons many people still reject the idea of self-identifying as Indian. I asked the reasons and a member of GCI expressed that:

Some people think that by asserting indigenous identity they will be required to *go back to the past*, live like animals, naked, hunting with arrows, in sum change their way of life. In general, they reject the idea of self-identifying, because those people still think that Indians do not have value, that Indians are lazy, and have the worse qualities a human being can have. (Maria member of GCI 2004)

Members of GCI interpreted these kind of ideas as one of the many sources of prevention for self-identification and division within the communities that put on one side those who assert their indigenous identity, and on the other those who does not. In general, this division has come to create a broad form of categorization and expression of supposedly divergent interests; that is, the interest of Indians versus non-Indians. According to GCI members, it is not that the people who do not self-identify are not of Indian descent; it is mainly that they are afraid and ashamed of being Indian. This is why they choose the phrase “I am an Indian and I am not ashamed of it!” (*Eu sou índio e não tenho vergonha disso!*) as the main slogan of the indigenous movement. This was actually a phrase that people repeated to me many times as a way to explain and make

clear the process they went through to assert their indigenous identity. That is, from being ashamed to being proud. The phrase comes to signify both Indian pride and belonging to the indigenous movement. Other members of GCI and CITA explained that:

Seven years ago nobody would have the *courage* to say “I am an Indian”, because of the prejudice that still exists against Indians. The many bad ideas incorporated in peoples’ mind of what was an Indian prevented them from asserting their identity. But now, with the work the indigenous movement has done at the community level, we found people that feel proud of their Indian descent. This is what we want to mean by the word *resistant*, the awakening of Indian consciousness... the people and communities that are asserting their indigenous identity are little by little giving a new and better value to their Indian culture (Jose, member of GCI, June 2004).

The indigenous movement acquired more strength in 2000 when the communities were organized through the indigenous council CITA; from that moment on, we intensified our work in the communities raising Indigenous consciousness. We talked about what was an Indian, what it was not, what was the value of being Indian, what were the risks of asserting our indigenous identity, what would we lose and what would we gain. We did that because people were ashamed of their indigenous descent. They experienced discrimination because of that... Many people felt ashamed to say, “I am an Indian.” It was easy for a person to say “my grandmother was an Indian, my mother was an Indian” but he/she as a person never had the *courage* to admit he/she was an Indian...they experienced discrimination in the city and in the school where they were called “*índio*”. They even learned in the school that Indian was a “bad thing” (*coisa ruim*), an animal that would kill and eat people (Gedeão, indigenous Arapium, March 2006).

It is clear that GCI and CITA members strategically transformed the negative content of the meaning of being Indian into something of which to be proud. What they referred as to the project of raising consciousness sought to reevaluate the negative perception that people had of their Indian descent, highlighting the history of discrimination, and the way they were forced to renounce their indigenous identity. From this point, they started reconstructing the value of being Indian, to recover and express their hidden identity and history. As both GCI and CITA members expressed, this was one of the major achievements of the movement in the region. That achievement helped to consolidate the regional indigenous organizations, broaden its area of influence, and gain presence in three municipalities (Santarém, Aveiro, and Belterra) of the lower Tapajós and Arapiuns Rivers region. The slogan was appropriated and reproduced by

many people that came to belong to the indigenous movement. The statement became part of daily speech and was printed on t-shirts, banners, and post-cards where it could be read “I am an Indian and I am not ashamed of it” or “Indigenous, Yes!” (See Figure 3-1).

McMullen (1994) uses the concept of “conversion” to explain the strategy used by Native Americans of the southern New England to cover visible symbols of their culture to avoid identification. The author explains that in the 19th century after the Civil War, those recognized as Native Americans, either by phenotype or cultural difference, were subject to Federal Indian policies or actions of social reform aimed at the rapid assimilation process into the American society. In general, it was suggested that these groups vanish or be assimilated by a process of intermarriage with whites and blacks, and by the adoption of Western cultural values. In general, Indians were spatially, socially, and economically marginalized and became a stigmatized category. The author argues that natives reacted to the stigmatization of their identity by covering the recognizable symbols to give the impression of assimilation. They restricted the use of certain symbols, such as traditional craftwork, denied native religion, ritual, and language, and rejected the wearing of traditional dresses in order to appear similar to non-native neighbors. McMullen asserts that, despite subversion of visible symbols, native people maintained significant covert cultures unrecognizable to non-natives. The revitalization of their culture during the early 20th century resulted from an ameliorization of their stigmatized condition, and renewed efforts to make native identity and culture visible, despite centuries of covering native heritage. Desires for recognition as natives were based on their new pride in being Indian.

Thus, stressing the pride of being Indian constituted an opportunity to bring back and confront the historical conditions that imposed the idea that Indians were not supposed to be proud of what they are. One may ask then, what were the conditions that facilitated the phrase

utilized by CITA to acquire such a meaning? It is not just by repetition that it comes to have a meaning. Historical and lived experiences helped people to contest and incorporate a more valuable meaning to the concept of *indio*. As it is expressed in different narratives, with this phrase people managed to strengthen not only their own identity and the meanings attached to it, but also to continue raising the consciousness of those who felt inhibited in asserting their Indian identity. This is how two indigenous people explained the issue to me during their interview:

Here [in the community] people are happy because we do not feel ashamed anymore of our indigenous tradition....today I am not ashamed of asserting my indigenous identity, because I am certain that this was the identity of my ancestors, my people....Today we are clear, we have no doubts. Wherever we go, we assert that we are Indians....Today I am what I am, and not what others say (Luzia, indigenous Tapajó, July 2004).

In my community, there are still some people that have not yet asserted their indigenous identity. But, we are going to talk to them and for sure they will recognize their Indian descent, because we cannot negate our origin. They are ashamed, because you know, it is said that “Indians live in the forest, Indians are savages; they are spirits of the forest...” Then we have to talk to them and explain: “do you think that you are a different person than an Indian? You know we are of Indian descent!” But they would say: “but it is bad!” And I would say: “what is bad is to negate your mother and your father! I am Indian, I am the son of an Indian; my mother was an Indian, but my father was not. I recognize that I have Indian and non-Indian blood. I love both” (Davi, indigenous Arapium, July 2004).

Indigenous identity becomes thus not just an act of self-reference but also a significant world within which people make a living and through which they incorporated and highlighted the values of that identity. It is important to take into account that, in terms of their living experience as Indian, people were contesting the stigma that the category of *indio* has historically implied. Indeed, the use of the term *indio* involved the negation of all positive definitional qualities of the category. By being ascribed to this category, people suffered discrimination. As many informants recalled, “we were discriminated against because we look like, live like, and talk like Indians, in general because we are of Indian descent”. Eriksen (1968) analyzing the case of Afro descendants in the United States, explained that the negative and positive feelings and images of an identity of individuals belonging to an oppressed minority group are formed

from childhood to adulthood lived experiences. These images present “evil” as well as “ideal” prototypes that warned individuals what to avoid and what to become. This is what the author defined as “surrendered identity.” That is, a latent identity that is renounced because of circumstances and lived experiences, but that can be invoked and renewed: “it does not assume a total absence –something to be searched for and found, to be granted or given, to be created or fabricated- but something to be recovered” (Erikson, 1968:297). Being an Indian was not a new or foreign idea for the people of the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns region; Indian identity had been inscribed in peoples’ memories and own personal and collective histories. However, it was experienced mainly as a negative identity that people wanted to hide and keep in secret. *Indio* was as an identity, which people struggled to leave behind. However, as personal practical experience, many people felt that they could not, in fact, escape entirely from this identity. That is the situation that some of the members of the CITA and GCI experienced when as children they were sent to the city to live and work for a “white” family to have the opportunity to “become people” (*ser gente*). But as they managed to live in the city, discrimination did not end, because they continued to be tied to an Indian family, from a place that was identified as belonging to Indians; a condition that was difficult to be entirely hidden. They internalized a picture of inferiority and “uncivilized” as it has been imposed and reproduced since European colonization (Taylor 1994; Wade 1997). It is the sense of negative identity that they held deep inside them. Now they are trying to free the meaning of the category from the imposed and destructive images and freely express it with the renewed value they incorporated to the concept of *índio*. Charles Taylor explains that “we define our identity in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against” (1994:33) what others want to see in us. An identity defines who we are and

where we are coming from; it is this background through which our limitations and aspirations come to have a meaning.

Then, by contesting the negative connotation of the category Indian, they gave a new value to their identity; they acquired a renewed identity. But more important, this has given them the opportunity of recovering forgotten ethnicities. Indians started to see themselves as members of ethnic groups and got together as distinctive people to mark their difference from the Brazilian society. They also established distinctions among themselves through the different ethnicities they came to recover. In that way they were not just *índios* anymore, the negative sense of the category that defined them as separate individuals with nothing to share, without common history and culture. Instead, they reinforced their sense of kinship and group solidarity and recognized their shared culture and history. Their ethnic identity became a way to group together, to form a collective, and to unify interests. One can consider this as what Sökefeld defined as the “consciousness of sharing certain characteristics,” such as history, culture, etc. within a group (Sökefeld 1999 :417). What helps people to construct an ethnic identity is the acquisition of this consciousness, he asserts. Cardoso de Oliveira explains that the formation of ethnic groups reveals a dynamic of social relations that attempt to strengthen not only their ethnic association, but also the establishment of a mechanism of self-defense against intra or extra ethnic conflicts (Oliveira 2006). In this case, I am referring to what they come to see as the White-*índio* conflicted relationship, a conflicted relationship that has served to mark a distinction as well as to claim the rights attached to their ethnicity.

Like the *índio* category, the notion of aboriginality among indigenous peoples of Australia constituted a key-concept in the construction of Aboriginal identity. Hulsker and Borsboom (2000) explain that since the 1970s the concept gained currency and was applied at once to an

overall aboriginal identity that unifies Aboriginals from all parts of Australia on the basis of common cultural characteristics and historical experience of oppression and displacement. The term Aboriginal was also used in opposition to the identities ascribed to Aboriginals by the white Australians such as “full blood” and half caste.” Besides being insulting, these labels were used to separate Aboriginal in mutually exclusive categories. The authors show how by appropriating the notion of Aboriginality, aboriginals not only unified the diversity of aboriginal identities, but also differentiated them on the basis of the same cultural characteristics and historical processes. Aboriginality became a tool of political struggle to join efforts in a pan-Aboriginal movement to claim territory and political autonomy. Through this strategy, the Aboriginal movement became imbued with very strong Aboriginal meanings and values that helped to revive and reconstruct their distinctive identities.

As the *índio* category, as a historically ascribed generic identity, started having a new value, it was also inscribed to a particular ethnicity. For them, it was not only important to say “I am Indian” but also “I am an Indian Arapium, Mundurucu, Tapajó and so on.” The former implies more of a political statement that emerged from the indigenous movement. The latter expresses distinctiveness as people that share historical memories, elements of common culture, and a link with a homeland. This means then, that the sense of ethnic association helps to develop not only common interests, but also political organization through which to articulate them at the collective and corporative levels (Hutchinson and Smith 1996). In all the meetings and gatherings I participated in, people always introduced themselves by their own name and the name of their ethnicity. However, to talk about their ethnicity, they also mentioned their region of origin. For example, when I asked one of the GCI members about the meaning of being Indian, she answered in this way:

I am an Arapium Indian...it is the strong connection I have with the Arapiuns River what has given me an Indian consciousness. The Arapiuns River is our main source of material and spiritual life... I am certain that I inherited the spirituality of my ancestors. I do not know much about them, but my father always says that the spirits of indigenous Arapium who lived there along time ago protect us. The spirituality we inherited is reinforced when we go to the river; take a bath; take water home to prepare food and medicines, and get the fish we need. We respect the times of the river, there are certain hours of the day that we are restricted to go or to fish... (Iara indigenous Arapium, June 2004)

The emphasis in territoriality and the rights to indigenous land as an important component of people's ethnicity was always asserted, especially because it was the point that created major conflicts and concerns. At the time I first met the group, the secretary of CITA belonged to the Mundurucu indigenous group of the Takuara community. She explained that the most important aspect of belonging to the indigenous movement is having consciousness of one's own identity and assert it no matter the circumstances. She went on telling the story of a situation she experienced with a person not belonging to the indigenous movement who questioned the indigenous movement because of the land issue:

I am from the Tapajós River region, I am Mundurucu...The other day I had a conversation with a person that I think was a foreigner; he looked at me and said: "so, now everybody is *turning Indian*. Everybody wants to be Indian because it is assumed that Indians have more rights than Whites." I said to him, "we are not turning Indians, we are Indians." I also said, "It is not that we have more rights than the Whites, it is that we have *original rights* over our lands..." But as you know Omaira, even though we have those rights, we have not gotten them yet... We are struggling for something that is ours, our land. The same land was invaded by the Portuguese a long time ago. Now, we are struggling because we are not afraid anymore.....some people say that we are turning Indians only because we want to secure the land....It is not just a matter of land what make us to assert our indigenous identity. It is also a feeling of freedom... the possibility of being what we are inside, to walk our land and to fish in our rivers without being afraid of seeing our land invaded and our people displaced. (Yara indigenous Munduruku, June 2004)

What emerges from these narratives is nothing like an uncomplicated, dehistoricized, and uncontradictory series of feelings and meanings. The narratives show the multiple ways though which people claiming a particular identity start also defying historical conditions. These accounts also raise the voices of those who become aware that they have a history and have a

present, which they could speak about. It is intertwined with both the individual and collective experiences around their own conceptions and expressions of hidden identities. But this is a particular identity that is not waiting in an unknown past to be rescued; it has also been experienced in the present. To explain the process of acquiring a renewed identity, Erikson states that “identity links the actuality of a living past with that of a promising future” (Erikson, 1968). Or as Stuart Hall (1997) asserts, there is not a simple return or recuperation of the ancestral past which is not experienced through the categories of the present. Although identities are partially produced from the present as a result of political and/or social struggles, they are not just invented in a changeable way or without historical context. They are produced from historical experiences and cultural traditions of those who have not yet written their own history (Hall, 1997). Friedman has also pointed out, “the construction of identity is always a concrete historical interaction process that cannot be reduced to choosing food from a menu or any other unitary conscious act” (1996:130); it constitutes a serious matter for those who claim a particular identity. Indigenous peoples’ struggles are not about culture as such, but about social identity, which is constituted around cultural and experiential continuities. These struggles are also to claim territory as a reversal condition of “conquest” and invasion (Friedman 2000). As the narratives showed, asserting an identity is not just a simple act of glorifying the past and ancestors. It implies a personal and collective effort to confront positions used to discredit the genuineness of the indigenous movement and people’s identity.

CITA and GCI

During the first four years of formation of the indigenous movement, GCI and CITA became inseparable partners in the process of strengthening the movement. During this time, GCI had an important role planning and executing activities at the community, municipality, and regional level that sought to strengthen and made visible the indigenous movement as a key

social actor. As the indigenous organization, CITA, become strong and obtained its own funding, a certain distance was established between the two organizations. This distance was intensified because of the internal conflict among the members of the GCI group, conflicts that started since the moment Florêncio resigned as director of the organization. Lack of leadership and administrative skills to manage the project budget by the head director, as well as accusations of corruption, almost destroyed the group. During my first visit in 2004, GCI was leading the process and guiding CITA in every plan and activity to be carried out. By 2006, I found a very different scene; it was CITA which was at the forefront of the social and political arena (Figure 3-2). The organization had already been legally recognized and was working with its own funding obtained from the PDPI (*Projeto Demonstrativo dos Povos Indígenas* in Portuguese). The one-year funding was granted to strengthen and consolidate the indigenous organization (PDPI 2006). GCI, on other hand, had practically disintegrated. They did not have an office, external funding was not approved and even the support that they previously received from the Franciscan order was cut. The core members of the group split and there was no visible and recognizable leader to reorganize the group. It was clear that the group suffered from lack of support and direction that Florencio once gave. When Florêncio left GCI, he proposed as the new leader his own sister, who was also one of the founders of the group. Although this was accepted, it created tensions especially because other members of the group expected to be at the front of the organization. By the end of 2006, Florêncio made a new effort to reorganize the group, and tried again to get together with CITA. Unfortunately, this attempt did not have the same impact as it had when the groups first started.

A group of friends from the Santarém region that came together to share memories, food, drinks, and ideas that re-created and raised their Indian consciousness, created GCI in 1997.

According to Florêncio this was the way the group began asserting their indigenusness. He expressed it as, “It was a way for us to take charge of ourselves.” During the interview I had with him in 2004, I asked when and why he started the project of “indigenous consciousness.” As he expressed it , it originated from a personal experience while studying at the university in Rio de Janeiro and doing his fieldwork in the area of lower Tapajós:

Well, this idea has a personal dimension; I mean it has to do with my own *discovery* as an Indian. That started at the beginning of the 90s when I was studying at the Federal university of Rio de Janeiro. I was doing social studies about identity and culture.... through my research project with the communities of the lower Tapajós, I had the opportunity to get close again with the people in the region, and particularly with the elders who still held many of the memories and history of them as Indians. At the end, I concluded that they were neither *caboclos* nor *riverinhos* because they did not consider themselves as that. Although never recognized in public, these people always talked about their Indian ancestors... Thus, all the histories about their Indian past had a great influence on me. Given that I was from the same area, *originario daqui do rio Tapajós*, the experience I had with them made me rethink my own identity...so I said, “I am not a *caboclo*, I am an Indian...” When I was studying at the university, my classmates called me “*índio*,” because of my phenotype, the way I talked, and the kind of stories I told them...By the same time, the Catholic Church was supporting different activities and projects with indigenous and afro-descendant communities....within the Church people identified me as Indian and started inviting me to meetings in other Latin American countries where I met many indigenous people that were working for their communities. All these situations strengthened my identity and encouraged me to organize the group. At the beginning, we were just three, but later we got other people that wanted to join the group and help in our project of raising Indian consciousness.

As a member of the Franciscan order, he had the opportunity to use some of the resources available for its members, such as the radio station, “*radio rural de Santarém*,” which is one of the most popular stations among rural people of the region. Through the radio, the group started to divulge the ideas that promoted the value of indigenous culture and identity. One of the valuable resources used in this attempt was the recording that Florêncio made during his masters fieldwork in the community of Takuara with the shaman Laurelino, who was one of the most recognized and respectable leaders and healers of the lower Tapajós region (Ioris 2005). From this interview was extracted part of the text in which the leader talked about his indigenous

descent and asserted that all the people from Tapajós region were also Indians. One of the phrases he emphasized in his interview, “I am an Indian and I am not ashamed of that” became, for the purpose of the GCI, a political statement that successfully helped to increase Indian consciousness among many other people in the region. It was after his death in 1998 that his descendants in the community of Takuara started claiming their identity as indigenous Mundurucú. The memories left in the interview became the basis of articulation of the social and political organization of this group¹ and later of the regional indigenous movement.

The importance of the legacy left by this leader as a recognized healer through the Tapajós valley is also tied to the history of his initiation into shamanism. Particularly, it is important for the present case because of the person who initiated Laurelino. As documented by Edviges Ioris, Laurelino was initiated as a shaman by Merandolino, best known as Cobra Grande, who was also recognized throughout the Tapajós and Arapiuns regions as the best healer that ever existed (2005). He was more than shaman, but a *sacaca*, an enchanted man, with the capacity to live on the earth as well as in the deep water. It was believed that Merandolino had the capacity to become a big snake or Cobra Grande. For the Arapium and Jaraqui people of the communities of Caruci and Lago da Praia, Cobra Grande is the symbol of their territorial identity. The legend has served to tie them to an indigenous past, closely linked to the people from the Tapajós and Arapiuns region, and contributed to strengthening their collective efforts as an indigenous movement.

Candace Slater addresses the issue of enchanted beings in her analysis about myths and stories embraced in the cultural tradition and life experience of Amazonian people (Slater 2002). She asserts, “The parallels between enchanted stories and contemporary Indian myths suggest

¹ See Edviges Ioris for more information about the case of the communities of Takuara, Bragança, and Marituba and the process of self-identification as indigenous Mundurucu (2005).

these stories' roots in indigenous cultures even though their tellers are generally of mixed blood" (2002: 17). She explains that through the Amazon region there exist many stories of enchanted beings, such as Cobra Grande, that depict them as possessing a range of human feelings and distinctive personalities. They are also part of the special class of shamanic healers or *sacaca* who can travel at will in the river bottom. The idea of an underwater city where everything is perfect, people do not suffer of hunger and do not die, reveals a different vision of the world. According to the author, this native myth blurs the boundaries between earth and water subverting the fixed division between human and non-human, and even life and death.

According to the legend, Merandolino did not die as any other common human beings do; he disappeared from earth and still lives in the deep water of the Arapiuns River in an enchanted city. People assert that he lives in a place known as the "Torono point" (*ponta de Toronó*) located on the border between the communities of Lago da Praia and Caruci. "At that point there is a place called *meroca* that means Merandolino; it is the deepest part of the river" said the cacique of Caruci who described Merandolino Cobra Grande:

I was very young when I met him there in Mentai, which is the place where the mouths of the Maró and Aruá Rivers come together to form the Arapiuns. Merandolino was a *sacaca*...for us a *sacaca* is a healer...a person who gets into the water, travels underwater, lives in the deep water...he was a big man...he was married and had ten children with his wife in the enchanted city...he was also married in the earth with another women with whom he did not have any children...he was a good healer. He knew of many medicines to cure people, he taught how to cure...I narrated the story of Cobra Grande to the people of FUNAI who visited us...they agreed in reporting that the name of our land would be Cobra Grande and that it embraces the four *aldeias* [Caruci, Lago da Praia, Garimpo, and Arimun]... (Fernando, indigenous Arapium, 2006)

Thus, the coincidence of the Takuara community's decision to assert their indigenous identity and GCI's actions helped them to join efforts in their project of reinforcing identity and claiming legal recognition of their indigenous status and land rights. As the news about Takuara community became known throughout the region, many other communities were inspired to

follow in their footsteps (Vaz 2004) spreading the indigenous movement over the lower Tapajós region and Arapiuns River.

Currently there are 12 different indigenous groups claiming the legal recognition of their status and demarcation of their ancestral lands in 38 communities². All of them are affiliated to CITA. They are located within the area of the Extracted Reserve Tapajós-Arapiuns (RESEX), forest reserve Flona Tapajós, and on the right bank of the Arapiuns River in the region known as gleba Lago Grande. This last region is where the indigenous territory named Cobra Grande is located. They are not part of the extractive reserve area.

Indigenous Identity and Territory: A Twofold Claim

As in many other cases around the world, claims for the recognition of indigenous status are tied to the rights to preserve and demarcate ancestral lands (Occhipinti 2003; Toledo 2005; Miller 2003; Santoyo et al. 1998; Simmons 1989). Territorial claims are based on the conception of original homelands: that is, the land that has historically provided not only the sources of livelihood and subsistence, but also their existence as distinctive people. The concept of territory constitutes, then, an extension of land that is more than a productive resource. It encompasses symbolic and material meanings expressed through culture, religion, spiritual sites, memories, forest resources, water, etc., considered necessary for indigenous people's cultural, and economic survival (Stavenhagen 2005). One of the anthropologists of FUNAI expressed that since indigenous rights to land are founded in indigenous peoples' definition as first inhabitants of the Brazilian territory, land rights are practically a pre-existing right; that is prior to law. In this sense, the demarcation of indigenous land means that the state recognizes the existence of

² In the Tapajós region they are: Escrivão, Camarão, Pinhel, Jaca, Jacaré, Parana-pixuna, Jauarituba, Santo Amaro, Mirixituba, Muratuba, Limãotuba, Brinco das Moças, Marituba, Alter do Chão, Bragança, Takuara, Vila Franca, and Paricatuba. Arapiuns Region: Braço Grande, Muruci, Nova Vista, Aningalzinho, Amina, Arapiranga, São Miguel, Novo Lugar, São José III, Bom Futuro, São João, Miripixi, Cachoeira do Maró, Arimum, Garimpo, Lago Da Praia, and Caruci. Do Planalto region: Açaizal, and São Pedro.

original rights over a particular territory, establishes its limits, and grants its possession and usufruct (Nobre 2002). Similarly, Pacheco de Oliveira asserts that the application of the concept of original rights does not occur because of the legal recognition by the state (nor is it revoked by non-recognition). “The concept is formed from the continued existence of indigenous groups that have a connection with pre-Colombian populations, consider themselves as ethnically distinct groups, and maintain certain ancestral traditions” (Oliveira 1998:45).

The 1988 Brazilian Constitution explicitly recognized the rights of indigenous peoples to their cultural distinction. The constitution also recognized that the lands traditionally occupied by indigenous peoples are imbued with cultural meaning. Indigenous lands are defined in the constitution as: “those lands permanently inhabited by indigenous people and utilized by them for their productive activities, and are lands considered vital for the preservation of environmental resources necessary for their welfare and physical and cultural reproduction according to their traditional uses and customs” (Mendes 2005:15). According to Leandro Mendes, there is, however, a difference in what is understood by indigenous land and how the state conceives of it (Mendes 2005). From the point of view of the state, indigenous land is a legal concept contained in Law 6001 of 1973 known as *Estatuto do Indio* and in the Constitution. Land demarcation is an administrative action through which the state recognizes and establishes the limits of the land. For indigenous people, on the other hand, land constitutes a place of socio-cultural practices and ethnic definition (Mendes 2005; Oliveira 1998). The Law 6001 defined three types of indigenous lands (FUNAI 2002:15):

- Lands occupied or traditionally inhabited by indigenous people. This type corresponds to the concept of traditional lands over which Indians have rights independent of demarcation.
- Indigenous land reserves. It constitutes a special area obtained by the state to serve as the habitat of indigenous people. This type does not correspond to traditional land

- Controlled lands (*areas de domínio*). It refers to land acquired individually or collectively according to the national civil legislation through state or private donations.

On the other hand, scholars allege that although Brazilian law on Indians lands is coherent with the legal system, it hides a more basic right to indigenous people, the right to a territory.

What Brazilian law guarantees is the Indian rights to permanent possession and exclusive usufruct of natural resources, but the state has not renounced to the control of indigenous lands and territories (Ramos 2003; Van Cott 2000). In contrast, in countries such as Colombia, under the 1991 constitution indigenous peoples have achieved greater control over their territories.

They are empowered to exercise sovereign functions within the *resguardos* (inalienable indigenous communal properties) as long as these practices do not contradict the national Constitution. Within their territories, indigenous authorities exercise functions such as application of legal norms with respect to the use of land and natural resources; design policies, and programs for economic and social development, ensuring public investment and execution, observe and distribute resources; and collaborate with national government in keeping public order (Van Cott 2000).

According to FUNAI, the number of indigenous lands recognized and demarcated tends to increase as more “new” indigenous groups are known. Some of them correspond to groups that have recently entered into contact with national society; others constitute the group labeled by FUNAI as “resurgent ethnicities”. That is, those indigenous groups that “although presumed extinct reappear, asserting and claiming recognition of their indigenous identity and territorial rights” (Nobre 2002:19). Since the 1970s and 1980s when major changes in the Brazilian indigenous policy and Constitution occurred, many culturally mixed groups in the Amazon and northeast mobilized to attain state recognition of their Indian status and land demarcation (Mendes 2005; Oliveira 1999). Through a long process of struggle, these indigenous groups

achieved recognition by the state the existence of the northeastern Indians as an ethnic and historical unit composed of diverse social groups that are culturally and territorially related (Oliveira 1999). This achievement included the re-establishment of indigenous territories or what is defined by Pacheco de Oliveira as territorialization (*territorialização*): “the process of social re-organization that implies the establishment of a differentiated ethnic identity, the constitution of specialized political mechanisms, redefinition of social control over natural resources, and the re-construction of culture and its relation with the past” (1999:20). Thus, what is at stake here is the understanding that indigenous territory is not a mere legal or administrative action to secure the cultural and physical survival of indigenous people. Indigenous territories constitute not only an important element for ethnic identification, but also the result of processes of identity construction. Most of the indigenous peoples’ claims to land and ethnic identity rights are framed by both the political struggle to resolve land conflicts and by the socio-cultural meanings created through historical interaction with a particular territory.

CITA’s land rights claims are based on the concept of original rights over the territories its people have traditionally inhabited. Through these claims, they intend to achieve not only the demarcation of their territories, but also the recognition of their ancestral indigenous identities tied to that land. In a flyer distributed in 2006 by CITA to explain who and what the organization does, this concept is expressed as follows:

The indigenous council, CITA, founded in 2000, groups the communities of the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns area who are in the process of ethnic and territorial re-affirmation... This process constitutes a political movement that asserts the ancestral indigenous identity of the communities of the region. These communities have maintained their indigenous identity through cultural, social, spiritual, and territorial practices and have been transmitted them from generation to generation since immemorial times....

One can interpret this struggle over land and its role in constructing identity from the concepts of “inscribed and contested spaces.” The former indicates the meaningful relationship

that people collectively form with the places they occupy, the memories these places hold, and the cultural elaborations and practices inscribed on them. The latter, the geographical places associated with social conflicts that engage actors in political struggles to contest and resist differences of power. The importance of spaces is not only their manifest and distinctive appearance, but also their qualifying and latent meaning (Kupper 2003). The territory occupied by CITA members represents, from a global perspective, a key place for the convergence of environmental and economic interests. This means, on one hand, the global interest in preserving and establishing plans for the sustainable management of natural resources in the Amazon region. On the other hand, there is the ongoing process of frontier expansion of soybean production that entered into the region with the flag of economic development. These two processes have blurred the socio-cultural and political movements of people claiming their territorial and indigenous rights. For these global interests, the presence of the indigenous movement in the region represents an obstacle and/or complicated situation to deal with in order to achieve specific goals. I will develop further analysis of this issue in chapter 6.

According to Edviges Ioris (2005) the conflict generated in the area of the communities of Takuara, Bragança and Marituba as a result of the creation of the forest reserve Flona Tapajós in 1974 helped to reshape communities' social identity. The imposition of new forms of use and management of forest resources as well as the governmental decision to redefine people's identity as "traditional people"³ generated resistance. Ioris explains that term "traditional people" was created by the government to redefine the condition of the people already living in

³ As of February 2, 2007, the Brazilian government approved the decree 6040 that officially recognized the existence of traditional populations. According to the decree, traditional communities are groups who recognize themselves as culturally differentiated, who maintains their own form of social organization, occupy and use territories and natural resources for their cultural, social, religious, ancestral, and economic reproduction. The decree also defines traditional territories as the space necessary for the socio-economic and cultural reproduction of traditional communities, this space being utilized permanently or temporarily. Policies regarding this decree are developed through the National Commission of Sustainable Development of Traditional Communities (CNPT).

the forest reserves. With this term, the government responded to the many claims and demands of the population affected by the creation of forest reserves in the areas they have traditionally inhabited. It made legal the existence of population within forest reserves.

Although the concept of traditional people recognizes the particular relationship between people and natural resources and the environment, it encapsulates a broad number of social groups that do not distinguish their specific forms of socio-cultural and territorial organizations. The reaction to this category was the emergence of an indigenous movement to reinstate Mundurucu ethnic identity among the three communities, and the demarcation of their lands. These claims were not only to remain in their lands, but also for the right to exercise a particular way of life. However, as she points out, “the indigenous movement that emerged from these communities cannot be understood as a simple response to state control to regulate space or social relations. It was also an internal response to the imminent crisis caused by the death of their main leader, in order to maintain community social cohesion” (Ioris 2005:286).

Understanding and Joining the Indigenous Movement

The community of Caruci joined the indigenous movement in 2001 and Lago da Praia joined in 2003. Members of the communities explained that it was after they started participating in the meetings with the indigenous movement that they decided to focus their efforts to claim the demarcation of their ancestral lands and legal recognition as indigenous people. By participating in these encounters, they began understanding the value of their indigenous descent and identity. They also had the opportunity to understand the magnitude of the land conflict in the region. They have witnessed the long process of land conflict within the forest reserve Flona Tapajos and later the ongoing divergence between Indians and non-Indians

within the Extractive Reserve called Tapajós-Arapiuns, RESEX.⁴ The cacique of Caruci explained that he was selected by his community to participate in the different meetings going on the region. His task was to clarify the main points of the land conflict: the difference between extractive reserve and indigenous land, but more importantly how the possible definition of their land as an extractive reserve would affect their condition as indigenous people. He narrated this point in this way:

Well, we started participating in the indigenous movement in 2001. The first meeting I participated in was in São Pedro in the Arapiuns region. I went because we have doubts...because after the RESEX was created, we discovered that people lost control over their lands...suddenly there were many organizations deciding what and how to do things...then, internal conflicts among the people within the reserve started...I participated in another meeting in Vila Franca where members of IBAMA explained that agricultural workers have the right to work their land and that people needed to defend that right. With that explanation I got more concerns...it was not clear to me why people needed to continue defending that right...then, in another meeting a person asked a question, what was the difference between the extractive reserve and indigenous land? A member of GCI said, "An extractive reserve is worked based on a contract between the government and the agricultural worker and when it is finished the person need to renew it... Indigenous land is different, because the government produces a document that guarantees the permanence and usufruct of the land for generations; it recognizes the original rights to the land..." So, I thought, "this is what I wanted to hear," and I went back to my community and explained everything to them.... It became clear for us that we as *índios* have value, we have rights, we understood how important an Indian is... because we are Indians from our roots; we are not fake Indians!

The community of Caruci decided then to join the indigenous movement to defend both the right to maintain the control of their ancestral lands and their way of life as indigenous people. Although there was no imminent risk of displacement, people interpreted the conflicted situation in the RESEX as a potential threat to their way of life. Through the region different and confusing information spread about governmental projects to establish other RESEX in the areas

⁴ The extractive reserve Tapajós-Arapiuns was created in 1998 and has an extension of 647,000 hectares. It is located between the Tapajós and Arapiuns rivers. Currently there are 34 communities within the reserve claiming indigenous identity and land demarcation. Of these, nine communities assert Arapium identity. The RESEX is a part of national system of conservation units (SNUC) that include forest reserves (FLONA), areas of environmental protection, areas of ecological relevance (ARIE), fauna reserves (FR), and sustainable development reserve (RDS). (comunicacao.amazonia@conservacao.org).

adjacent to the Tapajós-Arapiuns extractive reserve. People from Caruci and Lago da Praia reported that they received visits from members of INCRA⁵ (National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform) to define communities' limits for a possible establishment and definition of their land as a sustainable development settlement. However, people of the communities reject this proposal and asserted to the institution that they were waiting for FUNAI to demarcate their land as an indigenous territory.

In June 2004, I visited the INCRA office in Santarém to learn about the projects of the institution in the region. Specifically I asked about the area of lower Arapiuns River and the situation with the indigenous communities of this region. This area was still under the administration of INCRA and was proposed for a sustainable development settlement project. During that visit, various INCRA representatives informed me that they were not aware of the existence of indigenous people in that region. Through a long conversation, they explained to me why “Indians disappeared a long time ago.” Their main point was the convergence of several cultural and ethnic groups in the region that ended up assimilating and destroying Indian culture. Also, they asserted that, although people from the area were of Indian descent, they did not constitute indigenous group. From their understanding, people were claiming indigenous identity only because they wanted to secure their lands. Many of the communities in the area, they said “see the establishment of extractive reserve as an opportunity, but others decided to *become Indians* because they think is going to be easier that way.” They finished their conversation indicating that they cannot consider these communities as indigenous Arapium until FUNAI recognizes them as such. Thus, for the communities the institutional and local landscape

⁵ INCRA was created in 1970. Its mission is to implement the agrarian reform and to register and administer state land property. Currently the priority of the institute is to establish a new model of human settlement based on economic viability, environmental sustainability and territorial development (<http://www.incra.gov.br/>).

was not easy and clear in terms of the many and divergent discourses going on about land tenure and peoples' rights to assert their indigenous identity.

Before and after the creation of the RESEX Tapajós-Arapiuns, several meetings took place to manage and resolve the conflicts of division within the communities between Indians and non-Indians. These meetings were organized to clarify the rights of one or another group and to improve the relations between them. In these meetings, governmental representatives participated in order to help resolve these conflicts. It should be noted that at the same time that the process of discussion for the creation of the extractive reserve took place, there was also an internal discussion and movements towards self-definition as indigenous people. One of the indigenous Arapium from the community of Vila Franca, where the official base of the organization of the RESEX is located, reported that the process of creation of the reserve was a very conflicted period in the region. Although the creation of the extracted reserve meant for many people the achievement of a stable condition in terms of land tenure, it ignored the internal socio-cultural diversity, and the process of ethnic re-affirmation and land demarcation claims.

The creation of the RESEX generated a lot of conflict in the region. Then, for us it was important to have an organization through which we could struggle for our lands, the lands of indigenous people. People said that with the RESEX the land would be secured...it was expected to stop the invasion of loggers and other people, but that did not occur. The problem got worse because the RESEX area overlapped the area of the communities that self-identify as Indians...then, we ended up divided, on one side those who wanted the RESEX and on the other were we who wanted our land demarcated...then, intimidation of our people started, the others said that people self-identifying as Indians would lose all their rights, that we were going to lose the right to retirement, maternity license, and we were not going to receive any help from the government.... All that was said to divide and destroy the indigenous movement...Then, we held an assembly in Vila Franca to clarify these issues... (Gedeão, indigenous Arapium, 2006)

In effect, the result of that meeting which took place in the community of Vila Franca in 2003 is reported in the minutes prepared by the *Procuraduria* of the republic. The meeting was held to clarify the situation and rights of Indians and non-Indians within the reserve. The

outcome of this meeting was an agreement signed between the community organization of the RESEX called TAPAJOARA and the Indigenous movement CITA. Representatives of different organizations, such as FUNAI, municipal *vereaduria*, CNS (National Council of rubber tapers), and *Procuraduria da Republica* participated as well. The agreement contains, among others, the following points (Pontes 2003):

- Directory of the RESEX and the CNS recognize the existence and legitimacy of indigenous groups and their organization within the area of the extractive reserve Tapajós-Arapiums
- Indigenous movement recognizes the legitimacy of the TAPAJOARA as representative in the directory of the RESEX
- Directory of the RESEX will not intervene in the process of self-identification of indigenous groups.
- Indigenous movement will accept a representative of the RESEX in the process of identification and demarcation of indigenous lands within the reserve.
- TAPAJOARA support the indigenous culture within the reserve and the ethnic diversity of the traditional population inhabiting the region.

In another passage of his narrative, the Arapium Indian also explained that with the creation of the reserve the communities lost a great part of their decision-making power. According to the Arapium, with the new structure of administration established by the government the communities were granted only one representative in the directory. This Law 9985- SUNC of 2000 indicates the organization of a *Conselho Deliberativo* to manage the reserve. Representatives of governmental organizations, organizations of the civil society and traditional population inhabiting the reserve, composed the Council. The Arapium leader asserted that by limiting the number of representatives in the administrative body the community lost power. The governmental organizations were the ones that gained major power in decision-making. In his interpretation, from an active and decisive role in defining what to do in the region and on their lands, the communities become mere receivers of governmental decisions.

Although conflict between Indians and non-Indians continues, the management of the situation is now in hands of both the indigenous and the Resex organizations. For example, on July 22, 2006, I participated in a meeting in the community of Escrivão, Tapajós region planned by CITA and Tapajoara organizations to resolve conflicts of relationship between Indians and non-Indians and clarify the rights of each group within the area of the Resex (CITA 2006). One of the major issues that came about was the idea that by self-identifying as Indians, people would lose all previous rights that they had as Brazilian citizen, such as retirement, maternity support, and benefits from development projects granted to the area of the Resex.

Edviges Ioris asserts that through the establishment of the extractive reserves as a system of conservation units, the traditional patterns of occupation and resource management of communities became subordinated to the management plan previously defined by the government (Ioris 2005). Thus, what the indigenous Arapium points to as “losing control” refers to the subordinate condition of people’s interests and management practices to an external agenda. This is the administrative and conservationist governmental agenda. This situation, asserts the indigenous Arapium, has contributed to a certain extent to reconcile Indians and non-Indians within the reserve. In order to regain major power in the area, the community organization of the extractive reserve has initiated the establishment of an alliance with the indigenous movement. Although this has become a strategy of both groups to strengthen themselves in key negotiation with governmental organizations, the conflicted relations between the two groups reappear from time to time.

Then, while all these situations were taking place, people from Cobra Grande territory decided not only to join the indigenous movement but also to create their own indigenous council. By 2006 when I went back to continue my fieldwork, I learned that the four

communities were in the process of legalizing their council named COINTECOG (Indigenous council of the Cobra Grande territory). This decision was motivated by the conflicts of land invasions that increased after they asserted their indigenous identity and joined the indigenous movement. As one of the cacique reported, problems with the people from Lago Grande region began when they started entering indigenous land to occupy the areas that the community members were not currently working. Most of these areas were natural grasslands, which invaders filled with cattle. The problem concentrated in the area of the community of Lago da Praia where the grasslands are located. During a visit to the area with the cacique of Lago da Praia, I was able to witness the presence of cattle and fences recently established dividing the area and closing off ancient paths regularly used by community members to travel from one region to another (Figures 3-3). After the community of Lago da Paria decided to join the indigenous movement, the community members that rejected the idea of self-identifying as Indians, created a new community called Santa Luzia. This community is located within the area projected for land demarcation (Figure 3-4). In a short time, the community of Santa Luzia has received support from the local government to establish a school and other social services that commonly would take a long time to get approval. Permanent conflicts have been experienced between the Jaraqui people and Santa Luzia members; in particular, the cacique has received several death threats.

Besides these actions, conflicts reflected concerns of a presumed “indigenous peoples expansion” that were rapidly diffused throughout this region. The main idea was that the indigenous movement was going to displace non-Indians from their lands. They explained to me that people said that “we transformed ourselves into Indians to take over their lands.” This situation made more difficult the relations between indigenous people and the neighboring

communities. Others, as many community members asserted, have invaded their land with the hope of a monetary compensation from FUNAI once the land demarcation is established. In the final administrative step of the regularization of indigenous lands, the government provides monetary compensation to the non-indigenous people that are removed from the declared indigenous lands. This is done after an analysis of the conditions under which that piece of land was obtained. That is, if the land was legally obtained before the initiation of the demarcation process and it was not the result of fraudulent actions (Nobre 2002).

As the conflict increased, people from Cobra Grande territory realized that they were managing the situation individually and that did not work well. The cacique of Caruci took the initiative and with another leader of Lago da Praia held meetings with the other indigenous communities, in which they decided to organize an indigenous council. To structure the council, they solicited the assistance of CIMI (Missionary Indigenous Council), which advised them about the process of constitution and legalization. This council has a similar structure as CITA, with a representative from each community in a general assembly and a main representative. The official base of the council is the community of Caruci and the cacique of this community is also the representative of the council. Although the constitution of the council has not resolved the conflict, it has provided them with an organizational structure that contributes to their integration and voices their concerns and interests. For example, through the council they organized in conjunction with CITA, a meeting with the director of INCRA to make an agreement about the exclusion of the Cobra Grande territory from the area proposed for the establishment of the sustainable reserve. According to what members of the communities said, the institution has already sent technicians to define and measure the area to be excluded. As the CITA representative expressed, the existence of an indigenous council within each indigenous

territory is seen as a positive and strategic way to join efforts and an opportunity to divide tasks. He asserts that the local councils would help CITA to concentrate on the political negotiations with the government to resolve land, education, and health issues while they can operate at the local level to resolve internal conflicts. Until now, there have not been more initiatives to conform local indigenous councils.

Conclusions

The process through which people have come to see and redefine themselves as indigenous people has not been an easy one. It has demanded a great deal of effort and patience from all the people involved in the indigenous movement. It has already been 10 years⁶ since the indigenous movement emerged in the region. Land claims have not been resolved even for the communities of the Tapajós forest reserve, though they have advanced in the identification and delimitation of their indigenous land. Besides, recognition and acceptance of their presence in the region have become one of the most enduring challenges that the indigenous movement faces. But as the challenges to position themselves in the region are at stake, it seems that the construction of their ethnic indigenous identity inspires people to maintain and strengthen collective bonds. In this process, people have come to recognize themselves as the embodiment of ethnic essences and natives tied to their land. As other cases in Latin America, the process of land claims has contributed to revitalize peoples' ethnic identities. That is, for example, what Wichi people of the province de Salta in Argentina experienced. During the 10 years struggle for recognition of their land rights, they focused on the recovery of their identity as indigenous people. Occhipinti

⁶ In June 2007, the indigenous movement celebrated the 10th anniversary of formation. A series of meetings was held to analyze the achievements and failures of the movement, and proposals for new objectives and strategies. An indigenous leader from Colombia was invited to this event to share with them the experience of land struggle.

(2003) assert that the process of land reclamation acted to sharpen and define ethnic identity, as individuals began actively to confront what it means to be indigenous.

The indigenous movement is more than a way for personal redefinition of identity; in other words, it blurs the boundaries between the individual and collective. In this sense, the indigenous movement constitutes a political expression embedded with memories, history, and territorial meanings that mobilizes people through collective action. Collective action is supported by either national or international legal frameworks through which they intend to legitimize their rights. The right to self-identification is intertwined with territorial rights as an inseparable condition for their own definition as indigenous people. The construction of identity is thus an active and interactive process through which the individuals build new ways of interpreting themselves. Indigenous identity is not just the product of the present socio-political struggle; it is founded on the historical, personal and collective memories that have inscribed them in the *indio* category. One can say then, that this indigenous rights movement, as many others in Latin America, came together as a social movement based on identity and consciousness, which Brysk has defined as a new form of ethnic politics (Brysk 2000).

However, with the difficult landscape of non-recognition and regional conflict, one may ask, what makes these people continue in this effort? How deep and crucial is their sense of indigenusness for people to wait such a long and hard time? How does the interplay of material, symbolic and spiritual sources of self-identification help people to maintain their objectives? I intend to give answers to these and other questions in the next chapter.



Figure 3-1. Indigenous activist wearing a t-shirt that reads “indigenous, yes!”



Figure 3-2. Banner of CITA's acronym



Figure 3-3. Path closed in the community of Lago da Praia



Figure 3-4. Map of the land of Jaraqui Indians showing areas of conflict and the *aldeia* of Lago da Praia

CHAPTER 4 CONSTRUCTING ARAPIUM ETHNIC IDENTITY

In the previous chapter, I showed the different issues and the socio-political and environmental contexts in which the formation of the indigenous movement of the lower Tapajós and Arapiuns Rivers took place. I highlighted the convergence of two processes, the definition of conservation areas in the region, particularly the extractive reserve Tapajós-Arapiuns and the internal dialogue about peoples' identity. I showed how by re-valuating the *índio* category the people from the Tapajós and Arapiuns Rivers constructed their indigenous identity. That is, from a derogatory imposed identity, the *índio* category became a proudly self-ascribed identity. This constituted the basis for the recovery of forgotten and hidden ethnicities through which people grouped together to form different ethnic groups.

In this chapter, I closely examine how people construct the meanings of their ethnic identity and the sources that contribute to embody the meanings of that identity. I specifically analyze the construction of the new meaning of being an indigenous Arapium. I focus on the communities' internal contexts and dynamics. Throughout the chapter, I provide analysis of the double process of identity construction. That is the re-construction of Arapium and the creation of the Jaraqui indigenous identities. I show how both identities are tied together as well as differentiated from one another. On one hand, both identities are based on historical practices and relationship with the land. On the other hand, while the re-construction of Arapium identity is based on the recovery of old memories of a neglected ethnicity, Jaraqui identification appears as a way to value peoples' essential practices of survival and as a form of distinction between the two communities. Lago da Praia and Caruci communities were originally formed from one major family who later split to form separate villages. In both cases, leadership positions are held by descendants and people affiliated with the same family.

The chapter is organized into three major parts. In the first, I provide a general history of formation of the villages and main families. In the second, I present analysis of the different themes and concepts that emerged from peoples' narratives about the construction of indigenous ethnic identity. This part of the analysis is drawn from data collected through semi-structured interviews. The third part presents the analysis of the focus group discussions developed with members of the two groups and other Arapium people of a neighboring community.

Formation of the communities of Lago da Praia and Caruci

The history of the two communities started in what is now the area of the *aldeia*¹ of Lago da Praia. The information provided by the oral histories goes far back to the beginning of 20th century, around 1910. According to interviewees, the main settlers of the area were the Balboa family. Informants reported that members of this family were born in Lago da Praia; however, there were no additional details about their ancestors. This family was composed of four women and one man. Only two of them remained in the area, María Isabel Balboa and Andres Balboa who formed the first two families. Besides them, people reported another family, the Benitez who were also native to the area. These families constituted the Indian ancestors of following generations. Some of the descendants of these families are still living in the area of both communities. The Balboa and Benitez mobilized the community to legally consolidate the village in 1972 with the name of Lago da Praia.

María Isabel Balboa was married to Benizio Perez, from the community Atrocão, which is located in the upper region of the Arapiuns River. According to the descendants of this family, the father's grandmother was Jewish. The couple had eleven children; some of them moved to

¹ I will continue using this term to designate the area that the group of people inhabits, the village. Community, on the other hand, will be used to mean the members of a specific *aldeia*. This is because I want to be coherent with what the indigenous movement has defined to distinguish themselves from other non-indigenous people inhabiting the neighboring villages.

Manaus, others died, and six formed new families that later split into the two villages. This couple lived in the area that is now known as the Toronó point, the place believed to be the location of an enchanted city at the bottom of the Arapiuns River. In the legend about the enchanted man - Merandolino, who had the capacity to turn into a big snake or Cobra Grande- Benizio and Merandolino appeared as being close friends. Many stories about their friendship are still remembered, but there is one particular story that people most like. The story refers to the invitation that Merandolino made to Benizio to visit his family in the enchanted city, but Benizio refused because he felt afraid of going into the deep of the river.

Andres Balboa, on the other hand, married Rosiene Guerra (there was no data available about her place of origin). They occupied an area of 500 meters along the river and 2000 into the forest where the village is currently located. People reported that Rosiene Guerra donated an area of their property facing the river Arapiuns to locate the first official school founded in 1978; later the village was moved to the same area, including the football field. However, after she died her son asserted that this was not his mother's will, and accused people of invading his land. The conflict for the limits of the village between this Balboa family and the rest of settlers has not totally been resolved although by governmental intervention the area of the community was secured. The conflict increased when the descendants of Maria Isabel Barbosa decided to assert their indigenous identity. This decision generated major division and enmity between the two Balboa families because descendants of Andres rejected the presence of the indigenous movement in the area.

New Families

Besides these families, new members came to the area to establish a place to live. Among them was Fernando Carvalho from the community of Aná of the Arapiuns River. In 1962, he married one of the Balboa women. Today, he is one of the most recognized leaders throughout

the Arapiuns region and within the indigenous movement. The other family, the Soriano arrived in the area in 1973 and came from the community of São Pedro, Arapiuns River. A Soriano descendant is currently the cacique of this *aldeia* and is married to one of the Balboa women. The memories about the development of the community are especially tied to descendants of the Balboa family. I decided to concentrate on these families because they represent the most prestigious members of the community and hold different leadership positions. Figure 4-1 shows a diagram of the three families that are descendants of Balboa-Perez couple.

The family of Zeneida Balboa and Julio Soriano holds the cacique position in Lago da Praia. Julio is also the representative of the community for the regional council CITA (Indigenous Council Tapajós-Arapiuns) and COINTECOG (Indigenous Council of the Cobra Grande Territory) See figure 4-2 picture of the cacique. José Balboa is a well respected leader of the community and has occupied different positions, such as representative of the fishing organization Z-20 (fishermen's union) and counselor of COINTECOG and CITA (Figure 4-3). However, the most influential family in the area is the Balboa-Carvalho. The authority this family holds was built through the long and dedicated work that Fernando Carvalho developed in the regions as representative of the *Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais*, STR (Rural union workers), which he interspersed with his role as community leader. He volunteered with this organization as promoter of local social organizations from 1980 to 1989. He left his volunteer work after he lost one of his legs because of an attack of a snake. Since he did not receive any type of support from the STR during this time, he decided to quit.

After this, he decided to embark on the process of formation of the community of Caruci (figures 4-4, 4-5). A group of eight families invited Fernando and his family to found the new community of Caruci in 1990. Three of these families were descendants of the same Balboa

Carvalho family. Upon entering, they each held leadership positions in the community organization: president, vice-president, and secretary. Through the work of Fernando, the community obtained support to establish an elementary school, a church, and an office of the STR. In 2004, after the community joined the indigenous movement, Fernando was unanimously elected cacique. His family and relatives continue to occupy the main leadership positions such as coordinator of religious services, schoolteachers, health promoter, and as representatives of the fishermen's union and the indigenous councils.

Defining Indigenous Identity

After the people from Caruci decided to claim their Arapium identity in 2001, the cacique initiated conversations with the people of Lago da Praia to gain their support and for them to join the indigenous movement. Once the main leaders of Lago da Praia accepted this proposal, members of CITA and GCI (*Group Conciencia Indígena*) were called to start the process of inscription within the indigenous movement and elaboration of the request for recognition by the FUNAI (National Indian Foundation). GCI and CITA also developed workshops on indigenous rights, which provided explanations about the rights contained in the national Constitution, Brazilian Indian statute, and Convention 169. These are the main legal frameworks people used to support their claims.

In 2002, the community of Caruci received a visit from the Technical Group, GT² (*Grupo Técnico* in Portuguese) from FUNAI who carried out a preliminary survey on the communities of the Arapiuns River claiming indigenous status. This visit did not constitute, however, part of the process of identification and delimitation of indigenous land in this area. Since the GT did not

² The Brazilian process of recognition of indigenous land is based on the decree No 1775 of 1996, which determines that the first step corresponds to the "identification and delimitation" of the indigenous land. To carry out this step, FUNAI organized a Technical Group integrated by anthropologists and other professionals as well as members of the indigenous communities. The anthropological report would present evidence of the traditional inhabiting of the indigenous communities in a particular land (Nobre 2002; FUNAI www.funai.gov.br consulted March 2008).

visit Lago da Praia, the cacique of Caruci informed FUNAI about the existence of another indigenous community. According to a member of GCI, visitors of FUNAI agreed to include Lago da Praia as an indigenous community in their report once they received the official request for recognition.

However, while in this first step of identity claim, people from Caruci had no doubt about their indigenous identity, people from Lago da Praia experienced a different situation. Internal discussions occurred as to whether to claim Arapium or other indigenous identity. The uncertainty that the group suffered was, to a certain extent created by the cacique's own ambivalence. According to him, since there was no anthropological research to confirm their indigenous descent, he could not be certain they could claim Arapium ethnicity. The process of recognition by FUNAI requires the expertise of anthropologists to reveal the socio-historical elements and arguments to confirm or disprove indigenous status and land demarcation claims. In this case it is particularly interesting how the Jaraqui people used this requirement, or better, the lack of fulfillment of this requirement to create their new ethnicity. As a result, during a meeting held in 2003 in Santarém to prepare the official request for recognition by FUNAI, the cacique decided that the indigenous identity to claim was Jaraqui. His decision was based on the fact that they were members of a fisher community and the main source of survival is the jaraqui fish. Their subsistence and culture have developed around this source and activity. Besides, the community is known in the region as the best place for fishing jaraqui. Once back in the community, he organized a meeting to inform others about his decision. According to him and many other people from the community, Jaraqui identity was well accepted, because everyone agreed it was an accurate representation.

During my interviews with them, many of the community members proudly expressed their satisfaction with this identity. However, there was also a group of people that, although they accepted being defined as Jaraqui, felt that their real ethnicity was Arapium, because as the Caruci people, they belonged to the same original family. Others simply emphasized that they were Arapium Indians though they were living in the Jaraqui land. Some of these people interpreted the cacique's decision as an imposition and as a strategy to distinguish himself from the other Arapium cacique of the Caruci community. According to them, "being Arapium would have meant for the cacique to be under the shadow of Fernando, who is a very well recognized and strong indigenous leader." During informal conversations, I asked other Arapium from neighboring communities if they considered people from Lago da Praia as Arapium. They all emphatically asserted that Lago da Praia people were *not* Arapium. For the cacique of Caruci, this was a wrong decision that will complicate their situation when FUNAI starts the process of land demarcation. As I will show in the next part of the chapter, the claim for Jaraqui ethnic identity is based on the same historical and social conditions that Arapium people used for their claim. However, the relationship of the people to the river and the jaraqui fish is what constituted the main source to construct this identity.

Processes of Ethnic Identity Construction

Dominant approaches to ethnicity have tended to interpret identity construction either from the instrumentalist or situational, (which focuses on the political and economic gains) or the primordialist (with focus on social bonds and primordial ties) approaches (Hutchinson and Smith 1996; Geertz 1973; Cohen 1996; Eriksen 2002). In this chapter, I take a constructivist perspective (Cornell and Hartmann 1998; Anderson 2001) and build upon literature on landscape and place attachment (Altman and Low 1992; Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995; Low and Lawrence-

Zúñiga 2003; Feld and Basso 1996) and identity politics (Beek 2000; Hill 1996; Hill and Wilson 2003; Friedman 1996; Hall, 1996).

In keeping with the constructionist perspective, ethnic identity is the product of historical and social contexts. Ethnic identity is considered to be built, dismantled and rebuilt over time through processes of human interactions in particular historical contexts. In this sense, ethnicity is the product of group actions to defend or enhance their positions, establish meaning, and achieve understanding of the world they live. The constructionist approach emphasizes the personal or collective contribution that a group makes to create and shape their identity (Cornell and Hartmann 1998). The construction of identity is also related to the historical processes of cultural and spatial production and reproduction. The former constitutes a socially constructed context through which individuals recognize themselves as part of an ethnic group and establish boundaries to distinguish themselves from others. This is the process through which a group self-ascribes and is ascribed an identity (Barth 1969). The latter constitutes the historical places that are socially structured and where individuals organize and practice their daily socio-economic life.

These are the perspectives that serve as basis of analysis of the themes that appeared in peoples' narratives. Consistent with the emerging character of grounded theory, my analysis produced six major themes. These themes constituted the conceptual sources through which people explained the material and symbolic sources that helped them to construct the meaning of being Arapium and Jaraqui Indians. These are: 1) sense of rootedness 2) historical memory 3) historical transformation 4) consciousness 5) social exclusion and, 6) identity politics. The conceptual explanation of each theme emerged from the series of categories contained in each. In other words, the categories provide the analytical content of the each theme. Table 4-1

presents the theoretical themes and the focused coding or categories that explained each theme. The table also shows the categories more emphasized in the narratives and the number of time mentioned by the interviewers. As a way to develop the analysis, I present each theme in a separate section. In this way, I can focus on the internal relationships of the categories of each theme. However, this strategy does not mean that each conceptual theme is independent or unrelated to the others. The order of presentation also is not intended to indicate a hierarchy or ranking of themes; it is more a writing strategy that permits the flow of the narrative. In practice, these themes and their categories fit together and their relationship and importance vary according to context and the different meanings that the Arapium and Jaraqui people give to their ethnic identity.

Sense of Rootedness

In processes of indigenous identity claims, the unique relationship of indigenous communities with their land has been invoked as a critical issue and as an irrefutable moral argument to support these claims (Occhipinti 2003). The special relationship is defined as the sense of rootedness and emotional attachments that indigenous people have developed for their homelands through long processes of experience and acquired knowledge (Feld and Basso 1996). Sense of rootedness refers to the emotional and cultural attachment to the physical environment, personal spacing, territoriality, and family and group use of space. Scholars argue that attachment to place contributes to individual, group, and cultural self-definition by fostering individual and group self-esteem and pride; it also contributes to create a strong sense of home (Altman and Low 1992). Through the sense of rootedness, peoples' feelings of satisfaction and attachment to their local area are combined with self-conscious identification with their community. Other scholars assert that peoples' attachment to land is in fact culturally formed. That is, the landscape is interpreted as a natural base transformed or molded by a particular

group's technology and culture, but in which individuals' own life experiences, practices, and performances play a crucial role in the attachment to the landscape (Altman and Low 1992; Feld and Basso 1996). Robert Riley (1992) asserts that time, landscape, and people are intrinsically entangled, meaning that feelings of attachments are not to the landscape itself, but to its memory and the meanings attributed to it over time. Anthropologists have also noted the importance of people movement through the landscape in the creation of place, conceptualizing it as movement rather than a container (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003). In other words, the importance of a place is not defined by its spatial limitations, but on the individual and collective movement patterns through which a locality is constructed and reproduced.

Yet, other anthropologists have argued the need to rethink the concept of "root" as related to identity and territorialization and the implicit mapping of cultures onto places (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Malkki 1992). For example, Liisa Malkki explains that assumptions linking people to place routinely are conceived in botanical metaphors, in which people are thought of as being naturally rooted in place and as deriving their identity from that rootedness. Moreover, the author asserts that concepts such as nation and culture has been conceived as existing in soil, and that terms like native, indigenous, and autochthonous have served to root cultures in soils; in other words, the terms have served to territorialize culture. The conception of root in this sense, tended to incarcerate or confine and immobilized natives and Indians in their places. This in turn has constituted a powerful romantic vision that rooted indigenous peoples' cultures in their homelands as if this condition were a moral and spiritual need (Malkki 1992). The assumed bonds of culturally unitary groups with their territories became a complicated concept in a world of Diasporas, transnational culture flows, mass movement of populations, and particularly in the context of territorial displacement. This is because the metaphor of root served to define the

“uprooted” and “displaced” not as a fact of sociopolitical context, but as a pathological condition. In other words, it tended to see uprooted people as losing their “territorialized culture and identity,” which constituted, for Malkki, an essentialist vision of identity. This is even more complex since cultural and territorial displacements are the common histories of indigenous peoples. However, by calling attention to the idea of root as immobility or sedentarism, the author is not denying the importance of place in the construction of identity. Instead, she wants to stress the relationship between deterritorialization and identity and the “multiplicity of attachments that people form to places through living, remembering, and imaging them” (Malkki 1992:38). This is particularly important in order to understand how people can reproduce identity and concepts of place or homeland in conditions of displacement or transnational migration. Deconstructing the idea of root allows us to understand how many indigenous peoples who have been uprooted from their original lands can reconstruct their territories and the historical meanings attached to them in new spatial and social conditions. The metaphor of root is not to suggest that indigenous identity is maintained as long as indigenous peoples are fixed to particular places. Gupta and Ferguson (1992) point out as an irony of these times that as places and localities become even more blurred with transnational movements and hybridization of identities, ideas of culturally and ethnically distinct places become more salient.

The way indigenous peoples perceive their land, experience it through everyday practices and political struggles, move throughout the landscape, and the meanings attached to land, have taken on a central discursive role in Arapium and Jaraqui peoples’ claims for recognition. Through the interviews, descriptions and explanations about the diverse meanings and strong relationship to their territory constituted a way to define their land not only as “home-place,” but also as a place of struggles for rights. That is, by stressing their attachment to land, they do not

intend to represent themselves as closed bounded, imprisoned, and geographically isolated communities; instead, they intend to connect their claims to national and global legal frameworks of indigenous rights that emphasize the close ties of indigenous peoples to their lands as form of definition. This is especially important because the Arapium and Jaraqui people are not simply claiming a piece of land; they are claiming the rights over *the* land in which they feel emotionally embedded, the land that holds past and present memories, communities' histories, myths, and multiple meanings. This is also the land of historical socio-political struggles and resistance of ancestors and present generations that make of this land a “contested place” (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003), in which historical differential relations of power and control of space and resources have been resisted.

In the narratives, when people talked about place of origin they indicated not only the locality of birth, but also the region encompassing this locality. Sense of rootdeness refers also to the region or geographical area where a person has established a routine of work, a history of family and social relations, and in general makes a living (Stewart 2003; Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995). In talking about the Arapiuns region, the term landscape provides a wider concept in which notions of place and community are situated. That is as to say that the Arapiuns' landscape embraces the values and memories in the places that constitute sites of historical identity for the Arapium and Jaraqui people.

The place of origin is where people feel attached through emotional ties created through kinship, friendship, intermarriage relations, and lived experience. Place of origin is synonymous with a home in that a feeling of security and belonging is developed. Anthony Giddens defines the feelings of security as the “confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environment of action”

(1990:92). Using the concept of “environment of trust,” the author explains the condition upon which feelings of security and trust relations develop. He points out there are some aspects of trust and processes of personality development, which seem to apply to all cultures, pre-modern and modern: kinship relations, the local community, religious cosmologies, and tradition.

However, none of these main conditions of trust has the same importance in circumstances of modernity. For example, kinship system, which provides reliable social connections and works as an organizing device for stabilizing social ties across time and space, in modern circumstances, is not longer the main carrier of social organization. The other context is the community-understood as a place- which provides a familiar setting and in which feelings of attachment and identification develop. In circumstances of modernity, these feelings also receive influences of distant relations that result from the intertwining of local and global relations.

Feelings of attachment to or identification with places persist, but they are not just the result of locally based practices. External and distant relations influence feelings of attachment (Giddens 1990). Thus, the notion of place of origin expresses the trust that the Arapium and Jaraqui people have developed through experience and feelings of security that their environment and kinship relations provide to their sense of self. These feelings are invigorated by the distant relations with national and international indigenous organizations that struggle to maintain and claim ancestral indigenous territories.

In the various narratives about the formation of the two communities and even in informal conversations, people always emphasized two conditions: being “natives” of the Arapiuns River region, and being the “original” people who settled in the area and constituted the two communities. Here “native” reveals the internal movement of population as well as kinship relations throughout the region. By processes of intermarriage, the communities have not only

incorporated people from other villages, but have also maintained a network of kinship relations throughout the Arapiuns region, a condition that also gives to these people the sense of territoriality, this is, interpreting the Arapiuns River region as the territory of the Arapium people. In this sense, land becomes a spatial self that come into being by being named; it also expresses the degree of shared knowledge, mutual experience, and common identity (Feld and Basso 1996).

Being Arapium means that I was born in the Arapiuns, I am “nativo” of Arapiuns, and I live in the Arapiuns region...thus, for us our people [*povo*] is Arapium...we discovered we are Arapium, because we have families in the high part of the river in the community of Mentai, and the Indians who lived there were the Arapium...we are Arapium because of our region and because it is known that here, Caruci and the other side of the river, belonged to the Arapium people...we had the privilege of inheriting this land, that is why we are Arapium!

The idea of native can be explained using Altman’s and Setha Low’s idea of genealogical place attachment, which refers to the linkage of people and land through historical identification of place and family communities. Here attachment to a place is maintained and strengthened by living in a place, being born or marrying in the same location, and sharing cultural practices (Altman and Low 1992). Besides Lago da Praia and Caruci, people interviewed reported kinship relationships in other 16 communities along the Arapiuns River³. However, not all of these communities are claiming legal recognition as Arapium Indians. Figure 4-6 shows the location of the Caruci and Lago da Praia and the communities that constitute their main network of kinship relations. Figure 4-7 shows the communities asserting Arapium ethnicity. The sense of territoriality and attachment to their land is strengthened by the use of the word *povo* as meaning the people who belong to the same place and their particular ethnicity.

³ They are Aná, Araci, Atrocão, Arimum, Cachoera do Aruá, Cutile, Jacaré (Lago Grande), Picanha, Murui, São Pedro, São Miguel, Tucumá, Vila Goretí, Vila Brasil, Coroca, and Vila Franca.

The second condition, “original,” informs the historical accounts that talk about the formation of the communities and integrate their history as the “first people” in this particular land. They are, at the same time, the people that share a common place to make a living, have a common origin, and share interests and concerns. The idea of having common origin, concerns, and interests is one of the reasons why people who are not related to the same kin group become a *parente*. In Portuguese, this term indicates a relative (belonging to a kin group); however, through the process of identity construction, it also came to mean belonging to the indigenous movement. *Parente* is either a relative or a person that self-identifies as Indian and is a way to recognize each other as members of the same group. This term then, embraces all people that self-identify as Indians. This type of belonging can be explained by what Linda Kalof (2003) defines as affinity relationship that is based on choice, not on blood, and centered around a political agenda or common concerns. In this sense, the term *parente* became politicized since it represents the people that come together through the indigenous movement to struggle for their rights. In a personal interview, an Indian explained this view.

Well, we considered that it does not matter if people are Arara Vermelha, Tapajós, Arapium, Jaraqui or any other identity...what is important is that all of us are Indians; we all belong to the same group. Therefore, we are *parentes*. It means union, solidarity...we also have a program in the radio station called “the voice of the *parentes*,” which covers the Tapajós and Arapiuns region.

Through all these aspects, people have developed a particular experience and come to perceive their land in a meaningful way. The social relations built up in a place are one of the important aspects for developing feelings of attachment. Low and Altman (1992) assert that attachments to a place involve culturally shared affective meanings and activities associated with places that derive from socio-political, historical, and cultural sources. Life experiences have emotional qualities that produce affective bonds with places and constitute a way to strengthen the self. The personal and collective meaning that places have, as a function of life experience, is

what fostered affective bonds with place. For example, an Arapium man described the connection with his land while explaining to me the meaning of his identity.

I can feel that I am an Indian because of my work on this land. I like to cultivate cassava and corn, I like fishing...sometimes, I go hunting... This is part of our way of life that we identify as Indian culture...I lived in a land that provides everything for subsistence.

The land embraces three interrelated spaces, the *roça* (area within the forest cleared for a garden), the green forest, and the river. These are not totally separated entities, although each contains a particular meaning and provides a specific source for marking people's identity. These are the main spaces through which people experience their life, establish and reinforce kinship and social relations.

For us, *índios*, the land is of great importance because it is on it that we plant, we have the *roça*, we harvest our food, from the forest, we get the roots and the fruits we need...the water and the forest is our source of life. We depend on so much from the river and the forest...without them we would be nothing...

Although each family has a separate *roça* within the forest, in this plots parents, married children, and even neighbors often work cooperatively. In this sense, the *roça* becomes a place in which interpersonal, community, and cultural relationships occur; and it is through these relationships that Arapium and Jaraqui are attached to their land. Among the products of the *roça*, manioc flour or *farinha* constitutes the staple food, which holds important symbolic meanings. By defining *farinha* as "Indian food," they feel tied to their land in a double way; that is, planting manioc and preparing and eating *farinha* means that they are reproducing their indigenous ancestors' culture. At the same time, the continued process of planting, preparing, and eating manioc flour contributes to strengthen kinship relations. This is an activity in which all members of the family are entitled to participate. Keith Basso (1996) in the analysis of the sense of place among Apache Indians of United States refers to the concept of "dwelling" and explains that it consists in the multiple lived relationships through which places acquire meaning.

The author asserts that by sensing places, women and men become sharply aware of the complex attachments that link them to the physical world. The self-conscious experience of place is a product and expression of the self, and that place possesses a marked capacity to inspire thoughts about “who one presently is, memories of who one used to be, or who one might become” (1996:55). The author points out that relationships with places are experienced most often in company of other people and that places and their meanings are continually “woven” into the fabric of social life. People are continually performing acts that reproduced their sense of place and present images of where and how they dwell.

I personally assisted and participated in the process of *farinha* making, through which I learned the importance of collective work for the families, not only as a way to secure subsistence, but also to transmit values, as beliefs, and educate younger generations. The place of elaboration of *farinha* is also a space to update family members about community events and news from the indigenous movement. In this sense, manioc and *farinha* constitute more than a social crop and product; they both became invested with political meaning that originated in its association with Indian food and Indian culture (See figure 4-8, 4-9). Through this lived experience, land is not only a place to make a living or a source of subsistence; land is perceived as a mother.

I think without the land we would not survive...*she* is like the mother that gives us everything ...how can I say...she provides everything to live, not only for us, but for the animals and the plants from the forest and the river, ...that is why we consider the land as a mother...we belong to her...

The Arapiuns River has a dramatic visual presence in the region and in the place of the two communities. The river is more than a geological formation, it constitutes a socio-environmental entity that plays a key role in the life history of the Arapium and Jaraqui people. Images, memories, and histories that evoke from the river tied the Arapium and Jaraqui to the past and

present life as indigenous people. The river's depth and dimension are a source of pride. See figures 4-10 and 4-11 for views of the river. Susan Clayton (2003) asserts that the natural environment can encourage a strong and positive sense of self. It constitutes an important aspect of identity since it influences the way in which people think of and define themselves. The natural environment may enable people to become a more perceptive knower and a more positively valued known: people understand themselves better and like themselves more. The author asserts, "An understanding of oneself in an environment cannot be fully separated from the social meanings given to the nature" (2003:53). The Arapiuns River is not a barrier frontier; instead, it is a source of communication and internal and external relations. It links places and demarcates them, nurtures the lakes formed throughout the region. Forest and villages surround these lakes. The houses located around the lakes and the river capture a permanent beautiful image and rhythmic sounds of the landscape. In the afternoon, the sounds of the wind intertwine with sounds of the waves that reach the long, white beach. The afternoons is the time to go to the river to take a bath and refresh the hard and hot day, it is the time to play with friends in the clear water of the Arapiuns River while thousand of little fish surround you as if they were expecting something from you. People say, the afternoon is also the time to be careful; the ray comes to the beach to "sleep" and if one steps on one of the rays, even the most brave Indian would cry like a baby when the ray attacks. It does not kill people, but produces profound pain.

With the river come the fish, the wind, and the myths, they said. Through their lived experience, people learned when and where they could go fishing, and the good or bad times to travel. The identity of people is tied to the river, either because it is their place of origin or because it is the source of subsistence. In both communities, fishing is the main productive activity and a source of cash income. They both shared a system of fishing that is ordered by the

phases of the moon and the seasonal weather changes (winter or summer). Although people go fishing during the whole year, the main fishing season takes place between May and September. During this period, people said the best days to catch good quantities of fish are between the first quarter and full moon phases. Fishing is either an individual or a collective activity. Individual (family) fishing takes place during the low fishing season and during the other moon phases. This type of fishing is merely for family consumption or exchange for other food products within the community. Collective fishing, on the other hand, occurs during the high season in the days of the first quarter and full moon when the school of fish is easy to catch. This collective fishing serves two purposes: redistribution and cash income. Redistribution helps to maintain and reinforce kinship and social relations. It is a way to help each other and to secure returns when resources are scarce. However, the cash income product of the sale is only for those who directly participated in the collective fishing. People sell the fish directly in Santarém and/or to the boats that pass by the area. See Figures 4-12, 4-13 for pictures of this activity.

Among the variety of fish, the Jaraqui is the most common source of protein (Figure 4-14). The activity and the fish constitute the main source of ethnic identification for the people of Lago da Praia. They interpret their community as “the place of jaraqui fish.”

People say that Lago da Praia is the *place* of the jaraqui fish...this is the typical fish of the region. When the school of fish comes, we get a lot of jaraqui. The fish is what identifies this place; that is the reason for us to be Jaraqui Indians...the fish is our subsistence....we took its name, because fishing is what we do, jaraqui is what we eat...we are Jaraqui!

Susan Clayton (2003) asserts that there are many people for whom important aspects of their identity lie in their ties to the natural world, which can be connections to a specific natural object such as animals, trees, mountains, and specific geographical formations. The author defined this idea as “environmental identity.” This refers to the sense of connection to some part of non-human natural environment, based on history, emotional attachment, and the perception

that the environment is an important part of what individuals are. As collective identity, the environmental identity gives individuals the sense of belonging to a larger group and provides them an assortment of beliefs about the self and the ways of interacting with the world. The environmental identity is formed through interactions, daily experiences with the natural world, and through socially constructed understandings of oneself and others including nature (Clayton 2003).

Indeed, the river, the fishing, and the jaraqui fish are centrally positioned in everyday experiences of the Jaraqui Indians. In every family and social conversation, one can hear people talk about the fishing journey, the time spent, the mood of the river, places to go, routes of the school of fish, the good and bad fishing, and the fish to eat. It is particularly satisfying when fishermen bring home a good quantity of jaraqui fish to eat with *farinha*. For the Jaraqui people, the mixture of a boiled or roasted jaraqui fish with *farinha* represents a symbolic way of “nurturing” their identity, meaning that by eating, they invigorate their body and their soul with the essential substance that constitutes what they are, Jaraqui Indians. During the occasions I spent sharing their meals, they always said to me that if I continue eating *farinha* and jaraqui fish I can become a Jaraqui, but that this process would require me to spend more time in the river and let it change the color of my skin and soul to that of an Indian. It was also required, that over time marry a Jaraqui Indian to become fully incorporated into their community and ethnicity.

Examples of the relationship between food and constitution of identity can be found in other cases among Amazonian indigenous. For example, in research among the Wari’ Indians of the state of Rondonia, Brazil, Vilaça (2007) found that food was central to the constitution of physical identity. The author explains that for the Wari’ the body is not merely the location where social identity is expressed and is not conceived as a genetic given. Instead, it is

constructed through life by means of social relationships. For the Wari', identity between two people or two groups is conceived as a relationship of consubstantiality, determined by physical proximity and commensality. Those who live and eat together, or share the same diet become consubstantial over time, especially if they end up intermarrying. The author goes on to argue that studies of interethnic contact do not pay enough attention to indigenous socio-cosmic conceptions about the nature of interactions and distinction between groups. She argues that in place of "acculturation" or "friction", what can be found in interethnic relationships is "transubstantiation" and metamorphosis.

In the communities, people have different places to fish, but one is always preferred, at or near the *toronó* point. There, all identities come together in the same place. The Arapiuns River serves to facilitate the gathering of the Jaraqui and Arapium people. This is the land of the jaraqui fish; it is the enchanted place; the home of Merandolino Cobra Grande.

The name Cobra Grande came from the story of a man who was a *sacaca* and a healer that used to transform himself into a big snake. He had a special room in his home where he spent the times when he turned into a snake... He used to travel a lot in the region from the high part of the Arapiuns to Santarém... When he was traveling with his partners, he used to say to them, "hey guys, I am going to wait for you at the point of *toronó*" and then he got into the water and disappeared. When the boat arrived to the point, he was already there [*tonoro* point] smoking... People believed he became enchanted in this place.

The legend of Cobra Grande is very important for us. It means our territory, the territory of the four *aldeias*...The forest, the *roça*, the animals, the people, the river...the land to be demarcated.

According to the informants, this is a place where strange things happen; people get lost, confused, or lucky. People hear strange sounds that seem to come from the depth of the river, from the enchanted city. When the wind is strong and makes the waves of the river hit *toronó* point, people believe Merandolino is in a bad mood. Every year, in June when school festivals are celebrated, children and members of the two *aldeias* perform songs and theatrical plays about the story of Merandolino Cobra Grande. Children are required to recreate the story of Cobra

Grande as school homework (See figure 4-15). These socially shared feelings and identities between the people and the landscape constitute the main sources through which people experience the sense of rootedness. However, this sense of rootedness intertwines with peoples' memory and the historical significance these feeling and experiences can have for the strengthening of their identities.

Historical Memory

Historical memory constitutes a powerful source of knowledge and emotions that help to shape identities. Memory is the product of social and cultural experience embedded in objects, places, and practices. Thus, memory as a product of historical social experience involves processes of remembering and forgetting (Fausto and Heckenberger 2007; Middleton 1990; Misztal 2003). Memory is crucial to our understanding of present circumstances; it helps not only to explain the past, but also to understand the present. Memory relates to the emotions that the past produced, and the ways emotions help to reshape the meaning of the past to make it relevant in the present. In this sense, memory constitutes a crucial element in the construction of identity (Misztal 2003; Antze 1996). In the analysis of the constitution of the self, Robert Bellah et al. (1985) talks about community of memory, through which individuals are tied to the past and envision their hopes for the future. The community of memory helps to maintain the memories of the past by retelling its stories, and the history of women and men who have embodied and exemplified the meaning of the community. It also tells painful stories of shared suffering, either the suffering received or the suffering inflicted. In general, the community of memory carries the context of meanings that allow individuals to connect their own aspirations with the aspirations of a larger group and thus envision themselves as being part of a common good (Bellah et al. 1985). In this sense, community constitutes an entity, a past and present

reality invested with memories, sentiments attached to kinship, friendship, neighboring, rivalry, and jealousy that inform the social process of everyday life (Cohen 1985).

In talking about historical memory, one needs to consider the culturally acquired categories of definition and understanding of one's place in history. One needs also to take into account the changing socio-cultural and historical codes and contexts that inform what one should remember or forget. This, at the same time, embraces notions of time as processes of continuity and change. Self-identity presumes memory as it informs who one was in the past and who one is in the present. The content of memory is then subject to temporality as it changes according to circumstances and identities. From the interviews, historical memory is expressed through the recognition of an Indian descent. Recognizing implies looking back in the family history at a fact, event, or memory that links the person to the notion of indigenusness. When people recognize their Indian descent, they necessarily talk about previous generations, parents and grandparents as being *índios*.

We are Indian because of our ancestors; my grandparents were Indians. The father and mother of my father were Indians....my mother even accepted that she was an Indian. That is why we say that we are of Indian descent.

The generational component constitutes one of the key factors for a person to recognize their own Indian identity. In the analysis of identity claims by the Pataxó, a mixed indigenous group of eastern Brazil, Warren (2001) shows how family memory helps to construct the concept of indigenusness by evoking and stressing Indian ancestry in their genealogy. Those family memories also revolved around histories of conquest, race exploitation, and anti-Indian racism that their ancestors suffered. In the Arapium and Jaraqui case, memory recounts past Indian generations either as a product of personal experience or by conveying family memories and histories, as the quotes show.

I knew about my ancestors through my grandmother; she told me that her parents were Indians. She talked about the Indians, the names of the Indians that I do not remember any more....she said that they used to visit her there in the place she lived...that place was inhabited by Indians...she told me that she was an *índia mesma* (authentic Indian).

These family memories seem to nurture peoples' sense of indigenusness, since they place people in history. This history acquires significance when it becomes relevant to the notion of being Indian. The remembering of past events helps people to put together the pieces of history they know about their own family and the region; it also indicates that people forget and that not all memories are transmitted through generations. In other words, this is a fragmented memory.

My great-grandparents were *índios mesmos*...my grandmother told me that they told her that they were part of a tribe... and that during the time of the *Cabanagem*, which was a revolution that took place a long time ago, they had to scatter... my father, who is very old now, told us many stories about Indians. We knew about those stories since we were children and now we are passing them on to our children...

The term *índia/o mesmo* that constantly emerges in the narratives contains a depth and critical meaning for the assertion of indigenous identity. In the context of the interviews, the term explains the genealogical line of descent from the “original Indians.” Moreover, *índio mesmo* is intended to mean “authentic Indian.” This notion gives people legitimacy within a context that questions racial and cultural mixture as an expression of indigenusness.

Here *índio mesmo* used to live, true Indians! Wild Indians as some people say...they were the real Indians, the ancestors of our families...we are from the same root, but we have changed, though we continue to do the same things they used to do....

Family memories are full of images of *índio mesmo* from which the meaning of the present condition as indigenous people is derived. This term provides the basis for them to remember as part of a collective. However, having a sense of ancestral authenticity does not deny the historical factors that forced their cultural mixture. It does not deny the historical transformation they have gone through. I will discuss this issue in depth later.

Memory operates at different levels and takes different forms. Barbara Misztal (2003) points out the different forms of memory such as the “habit memory” which refers to our capacity to reproduce certain performances and tasks. According to the author, habit is the mode of inscribing the past in the present, as present. In other words, it “brings the past into present by actions” (2003:8). These actions remind us about the set of rules and principles of classification and distinction. Actions constitute lived experiences that are at the same time, important sources of memory and thus of identity construction. From the interviews, issues of lived experience emerged in the concept of “practicing Indian culture,” which refers to the customary or common Indian way of doing things to make a living. When referring to the practice of Indian culture the person asserts that he or she knows the culture by personal involvement or experience. That is, they refer to the everyday practices that they understand as related to Indian culture.

We have a different culture, the culture of Indians.... I know I am an Indian because what Indians eat, I eat...I eat *farinha* and *xibé*, I drink *tiborna*, *tarubá*, and *manicoera*...we eat all those things that people produce from cassava, that is what the Indians produce...How cannot we be Indians?

From what and how they develop their work, what they eat, and the place they live, they have acquired certain knowledge that reinforces their sense of indigenusness. This is another example from the narratives:

I realized that I was Indian because I live in the forest, because of my customs, and because the culture in which I grew up....it is not that we were something different, we have just been *índios*... in the forest we live, what else can we be?...

All these memories are not just the product of individual remembering. They constitute shared memories of events and objects that are social in origin (Middleton and Edwards 1990). In the process of remembering and sharing memories, people reinterpret and rediscover features of the past that give new meanings to their own identity. Moreover, forgotten events also come into sight along with the new meanings. Remembering and forgetting constitute key elements in

the process of identity construction and in the efforts to legitimize peoples' political claims. I will discuss this throughout the next two sections.

Historical Transformation

Historical transformation refers to the different events and social-political conditions that induced processes of cultural and ethnic changes. The Arapium and Jaraqui ethnic identity is thus, constructed by a combination of attributes to which people apply different meanings. When they talk about their sense of indigenusness, Arapium and Jaraqui people place themselves in an ambiguous condition. That is, they recognize that their experience as indigenous people is contemporary and that it differs from ancient generations. At the same time, they claim to be the product of the same radical changes experienced by indigenous people. In this sense, assertion of ethnic identity is based not on conceptions of continuity -as if they were the same as those indigenous people from centuries ago-but rather on change. This as to say that the variety of historical, social, and cultural processes that caused radical changes gave origin to new forms, meanings, and understandings of what is to be indigenous. The construction of Arapium and Jaraqui ethnic identities encompasses apparently contradictory images, traits, and stereotypes that do not exclude them from definitions of indigenusness. The historical transformation presented in this context contains explanations that depart from what interviewers interpreted as racial and cultural mixture as in the quote below.

Here in the Amazon, there was a mixture of races, especially the mixture of Whites with other different indigenous groups. That is why people call us *caboclo* ...but for us a *cabloco* is not much different from an Indian, it is just the name that is different. In fact, we are considered as *tapuios*; the true *tapuios* of the Amazonian region. *Tapuio* is an Indian mixed with Black, White, and other Indians...the current Arapium Indian is not a "pure" Indian; the Arapium is the product of the mixture of many ethnic groups. Moreover, the current Arapium Indians varied in term of skin color whether brown or almost black, and the type of hair...but what really matters is that the current Arapium Indian believes in his culture, believes that he is an Indian, and behaves as an *índio mesmo*.

Important issues emerged from this description such as the categorization of ethnicity through phenotype features and the use of intermediate categories of definition. That is, the use of the terms *caboclo* and *tapuio* that signal important questions about the nature of ambiguity and the significance of the relationship between racial and social relations. This significance derived from historical and political factors, which established conditions for social and cultural change. In the anthropological understanding of the presumed inevitable extinction of indigenous cultures, the terms *caboclo* and *tapuio* served to explain the process of cultural disintegration. In the Brazilian anthropological literature, these categories represent a continuum of the acculturation process. First was the *tapuio*, which refers to an Indian who lost his original ethnic identity and the normative system of his original culture (Moreira 1988). However, the *tapuio* as members of a social group integrated cultural elements of different indigenous traditions. On the other hand, *caboclo* not only refers to the mixture of culture and races, but also to the historical, economic, and political forces that consolidated the transformation of Indian populations in a peasantry type society that makes him undistinguished from the wider society (Harris 1998; Parker 1989; Wagley 1976 [1953]; Ross 1978; Ribeiro 1996). Gomes (2000) asserts that until quite recently in anthropological thinking, the *caboclo* term was considered a benevolent fate reserved for the Indian; the only chance the Indians had to survive. Today, many of the indigenous groups that supposedly passed through this continuum process of assimilation are engaged in restoring their forgotten ethnicities and cultures (Ramos 2003; Oliveira 1999). In general, what emerged from the narratives is that the *caboclo* and *tapuio* terms are reinterpreted as a form of Indian persistence.

Moreover, the notion of mixture expressed here challenges the official conception on which it is based. In Brazil, as well as other Latin American countries, mixture emerged as an

official discourse and ideology of nation building that supposedly dismantled colonial forms of racial and ethnic differentiation and oppression (Wade 2005; Whitten 1996). Mixture, as the key symbol for national identity, promoted the idea that mixed people constituted a homogeneous subject. That is, by the very process of mixture of its constitutive parts, the Indian and the Black, would each disappear through the whitening process. The idea of disappearance implies that Indians or Blacks in the long term would not represent significant referents of identity. What one sees in the above passage, is not only that they did not disappear but also that they are actively reconstructing themselves as political subjects conscious of their cultural mixture heritage. Cultural/racial mixture is conceived as a form of survival and not as a form of disappearance.

Additionally, the definition of the current Arapium Indian placed it in a dualistic condition. On one hand Arapium is defined as “not pure Indian;” on the other as an *índio mesmo* or authentic Indian. This duality establishes a challenging understanding of indigenusness; it goes beyond binary conceptions of definition of what is it to be indigenous such as authentic-fake. What this duality implies is that not being pure in genealogical terms does not conflict with the authenticity that the notion of *índio mismo* entails. In other words, not being pure does not conflict with the idea of being authentic or true to themselves (Friedman 2000; Taylor 1994). In this sense, the notion of “racial purity” is not part of the definition of their ethnic identity just as has been the case of the many of the so-called “re-emerging” indigenous groups in Argentina that included not only groups of mixed descent, but also indigenous peoples who have been considered extinct for centuries (Gordillo and Hirsch 2003). This in turn, questions notions of authenticity that stress the maintenance of cultural/racial characteristics that make them genuine representatives of ancient indigenous populations. Instead, authenticity is experienced through

processes of social interactions that validate their sense of indigenusness. The social actors of this validation pertain to the authorities in the communities, and indigenous leaders at local and national levels that Warren and Jackson (2002) have defined as authenticators. What this duality explains about their historical transformation is that “they continue to be Indians, although they have changed.” However, the basis of this sense of sameness originates in their generally shared cultural traits, and historical experience that situates them as products of the radical changes suffered by indigenous people. One can say, then, that Arapium and Jaraqui people affirm their identity by differentiating themselves from their indigenous ancestors. This is an assertion that emphasizes change as one of the critical elements of their ethnic identity. In the narratives, the notion of change is expressed in different ways. One way is talking about the factors that enforced the loss of their ancestral culture.

We have Indian blood, we were born with that, but we forgot because of the many ideas that were inscribed in our minds...we perceived that our culture was hidden, was not transmitted, and was not given continuity...

This idea of having been forced to forget their identity and culture is about dominant ideas that denied their existence as indigenous people. Being forced to forget also refers to the historical conditions that induced the lost of cultural tradition and knowledge and therefore to believe that their Indian culture and ethnic identity vanished. This signals the many national projects of integration of indigenous group into societies (Gomes 2000; Moreira 1988).

The law of the Whites came...it undervalued our culture; it took away our culture. We went to school and grew up learning things that were not part of and were different from our culture...and we left behind our own...but now we are searching and every time we are learning more about our own culture, about our craftworks...and that is a good thing, that is beautiful.

Indeed, these ideas remind us that cultural change does not necessarily generate change of ethnic identities as if this were a linear cause-effect action (Barth 1969). Cardoso de Oliveira asserts that ethnic groups can maintain their identity even if they have gone through processes of

acculturation and cultural change (Oliveira 2006). Thus, despite relative integration into the dominant society, ethnic identities may re-emerge and become visible. However, it is in this process of becoming visible that culture becomes a critical symbolic and ideological element in the construction and claim of a particular ethnic identity. That is, indigenous Arapium and Jaraqui assert their ethnic identity based on the idea that they are part of a different culture. However, they have been careful in indicating that by historical shared experience this culture suffered fragmentation. The fragments of this culture are what they are using to distinguish themselves from the dominant society. Nevertheless, to be able to use the symbolic meaning of culture requires other actions. As the quote above suggests learning, knowing, and gaining consciousness, allows the Arapium and Jarqui people to understand the value of their culture and identity. I develop more on this issue in the next section.

Consciousness

Consciousness refers to the process of coming into existence and becoming active as indigenous people. Consciousness includes the task of recapturing peoples' history by dismantling an imposed restrictive knowledge that reduced the understanding of their historical heritage. Embedded in social structures of power, this restrictive knowledge worked as an explanatory framework that produced certain knowledge to reinforce ideas about indigenous people. These ideas not only interpreted Indians as inferior but also as subjects of an imminent extinction. This imposed knowledge about what indigenous people supposedly were in the past, and what they would become in the present, constituted a powerful controlling entity. This knowledge was powerful because it was transmitted as a historical truth that had an ideological function (Foucault 1972). Restrictive knowledge served to negate their existence and to inscribe in peoples' mind that they were not Indians anymore. Restrictive knowledge distorted the

understanding of their history. This kind of knowledge in fact, removed people from their own history.

Before us, Caruci, Garimpo and the other 10 communities have already asserted their indigenous identity. They did it before us because we did not have the knowledge...although we were Indians, although we were born Indians, and our parents and grandparents were Indians we did not have knowledge of that. Moreover, because we did not have knowledge we thought that we were Whites, but now we know that Indian is what we really are ...

Consciousness also includes the task of acquiring knowledge to provide new value to their role in history as indigenous people. Hill (1996) asserts that the first task for disempowered people to resist domination and ethnic stereotyping is the construction of a shared understanding of the historical past that enables them to understand their present conditions. Acquiring knowledge and new understanding of their past and present reality has helped the Arapium and Jaraqui people to self-recognize as Indians. This knowledge helped them to reinterpret where they came from and who they are.

I was 13 years old when I self-identified as Indian and began to search for information about Indians. I asserted my identity and strengthened my relations with the indigenous movement and with the people of the region. We are “resistant people” (*povo*) that after many years of suffering discrimination, massacres, and invisibility got the courage to claim what was ours.

This act of self-recognition then, constituted the basis of their struggle for legal recognition. Taylor (1994) points out that people do not acquire the language of self-definition on their own, but rather through dialogue with and sometimes in struggle against others. In his view, recognition acquires importance in two different levels, the intimate sphere and the public sphere. At the public sphere, the struggle for recognition involves the validation of peoples’ self-definition as well as the recognition of difference that in practice seek to confirm the uniqueness of the identity claim. This dialogue/ struggle contributes to shaping peoples’ identities as constituted through concepts and practices produced and reproduced in the society they are part

of. The new knowledge that helped in dismantling inscribed ideas or historical truths also emerges in relation to a concrete problem-legal recognition- and the possibilities for negotiation through political struggle. Arapium and Jaraqui people claim, not only legal recognition of their Indian status, but also the rights that entitle them to this identity.

Moreover, instead of relying on the idea that self-identification emerges only from an internal (either local or national) dialogue that produces knowledge understandable only within the limits of particular cultural system, rather I based the analysis on what Anna Tsing defined as “traveled knowledge.” This concept, placed in the context of global connections, refers to the knowledge that moves across localities and cultures (Tsing 2005). This is a knowledge that forms bridges and channels of circulation and gains from the experience of both the local and the global. In other words, this is a knowledge that becomes a mobilizing force. Identity claims rely as well on the knowledge of global discourses and existing legal frameworks for indigenous rights. Through these, Arapium and Jaraqui Indians apply a legal and universal understanding of their existence as indigenous people. Alison Brysk asserts, “Global actors are linked by a globally-shared system of symbols, knowledge creation and transmission, even though their practices are driven by the histories, politics and ecologies of the places in which they act” (2000:48). By making their claims coherent with national and global frameworks, they become invigorated, trespass the limits of the local, and position themselves as national and global actors. In this sense, the knowledge of indigenous rights becomes a key element in the construction of their identity. They provide a legal basis to legitimize their claim.

In every meeting, in every regional gathering of indigenous people, we acquire more knowledge about our rights...we are discovering our rights; we are putting them out to be known by our people...by knowing our rights, we are more certain about our indigenous identity. In the meetings, we learned that, like the Whites, we have rights, but we have more; we have rights only for us...

The knowledge of indigenous rights permitted them to discover that they have a new value, a legal value. This legal value provides them with special rights not enjoyed by other people. In other words, their mobilization for recognition is also founded on a struggle for inherited rights of social membership and identity (Niezen 2003). In the global context, indigenous identity has become a marker of positive ideas about cultural-ecological wisdom and survivals of a history of oppression and discrimination that helped in the formation of an Indian consciousness and pride.

Now, it is very clear for us...we are not ashamed any more. I am proud of being Indian. If someone asks me, I am not afraid to say, "I am an Indian," this is my true identity...when we recovered our true identity, we started struggling for our rights.

However, this consciousness does not emerge only through the knowledge of rights and positive images. There is another type of knowledge that emerged from the experience of social exclusion that is tied to their condition as Indians. I turn to this issue in the next section.

Social Exclusion

Social exclusion in the narratives refers to the negative experiences, either in the past or in the present, that Arapium and Jaraqui people suffered due to their ascription and self-definition as Indians. These people as well as the indigenous movement they belong to seek the protection that the Indian status may provide against the history of persecution, lack of political representation, and social marginalization. Alcida Ramos (2003) asserts that for "re-emerging" indigenous groups, the fulfillment of rights as citizens has great value since it represents a political instrument to transform generic exclusion into ethnic re-inclusion. In this case, the assertion of indigenous identity seeks to legitimize their ethnic distinction as well as to suppress the vulnerability and the limitations they have to access public services and fundamental rights. This is of special importance, because the Arapium and Jaraqui interpret their exclusion as a product of the lack of legal recognition of their ethnicity. That is, they have suffered exclusion because they were related to the indigenous people categorized as generic *índio*. This is a

stigmatized Indian detached from his culture and ethnic identity (Ribeiro 1996). This category placed them in a disadvantageous position that limited them from becoming full human agents in their own society. My point is that the *índio* category ascribed to these people embraced strong negative connotations that contribute to generate social discrimination. The negative connotations created and reproduced since colonial times are what people are contesting with their claim. The experience of social exclusion serves to contest this history.

When talking about the many forms of exclusion, stereotyping definitions of the Indian category appeared in the narratives. Stereotypes are mentioned in connection with racism and discrimination. Historically, stereotypes of indigenous people served to justify differences. They implied pejorative meanings of the *índio* category that were born during the colonial time. These ideas questioned the human condition of Indians, while claiming the superiority of White society (Acuña 1994 [1641]; Pagden 1982; Leite 1955). This practice of discrimination and stereotyping prevented self-identification as indigenous people. In the quotes below this can be observed.

Some people said that Indians were lazy and that Indians never constructed anything for Brazil and it was only because the Portuguese came that we have a country.

I thought that I was not an Indian, because people said that Indians eat people. They said, “Indians are like animals”.... I do not eat people and I do not go naked.

We believed as the other people that Indians were only those who live in the forest, isolated, naked... but after we got the knowledge, we understood that that was not true, that *índio* was not what people said. Then, we overcame the stigma.

Before if we said we were Indians, we had difficulty even getting a school; that is why I was ashamed of being Indian. Many people said that Indians are savages, stupid, and lazy. In Santarém, I never said I was Indian, because of the discrimination we suffered.

As many other issues discussed in previous sections, people's ascription to the *índio* category expresses not only their removal from their history, but also their reduction to stereotypic symbols of isolation, inferiority, alienation, and as marginalized subjects. This, in

turn, has served to dichotomize the meaning of *índio* as opposed to ethnic group. According to Jonathan Hill (1996), this dichotomy represents an ahistorical model that contributes to the reification of *índio* as a category of people alienated from the state and the ethnic groups as indigenous people with citizenship rights. Here the concept of identity politics enters to play a role in the definition, reevaluation, and legitimization of the *índio* category and the Arapium and Jaraqui indigenous identities.

Identity Politics

This last theme refers to the political meaning of Arapium and Jaraqui ethnicities. Identity politics implies the use of ethnic identity, its symbols, and the politicization of culture practices to mobilize and claim rights (Brysk 2000). The theme shows how identity forms focusing on critical issues related to the rights of indigenous people. Identity construction is not an individual process; it constitutes a collective action through which Arapium and Jaraqui Indians sought to speak out and to claim their rights as indigenous people. Identity politics shows how people felt empowered to influence decisions and relationships that have consequences for their lives. This means that people look for opportunities and understand the constraints they face to pursue them (Cornell and Hartmann 1998). It is a process through which indigenous peoples challenge and negotiate identity and contest structures of power that constrain their socio-cultural life and self-definition. Through identity politics, the Arapium and Jaraqui highlight the political difference between “we” and “them.” Through this difference, they position themselves as the “us” and highlight the rights that “we” have as indigenous people.

In identity politics, symbols of ethnic identity play an important role since they contain and display elements that contribute to their collective definition. Identity politics as a collective action contains icons of identity such as history, land, culture, and belonging. It is through the meaningful content these icons have for the Arapium and Jaraqui that identity politics can invoke

and represent the historical past and the changes experienced through time. The Arapium and Jaraqui people use these meaningful icons to articulate their claims to the state and civil society and to reinforce their identity in the communities. Thus, identity politics work as a strategy to facilitate their social and political relations and to insert into the regional and national political arena the need to fulfill their indigenous rights.

Belonging to the Tapajós-Arapiuns indigenous movement (CITA) is for the Arapium and Jaraqui an important step to look for recognition, defend their rights, and become a visible political actor. They strengthen their sense of belonging to the indigenous movement by participating in the different meetings, gatherings, and encounters that CITA organizes in the region. By participating in CITA meetings, the existence of an indigenous organization that coordinates, mobilizes, take actions and represent their interests becomes known. In general, participating in the meetings denotes the influence of the indigenous movement in the region. This influence is oriented to motivate and encourage people to revive and assert their indigenous identity.

After I started participating in the meetings of the indigenous movement, I perceived and reflected on where I came from, my real origin, and my ancestors. All these things made me think about and believe I am an Indian.

We [the community of Caruci] received an invitation to participate in a meeting in Vila Franca and we went. There, they [CITA] explained how and what we needed to assert our indigenous identity...then we got together here and we all recognized that we were Indians and decided to assert our identity.

In this point, one needs to consider the basis of the successful influence of the indigenous movement. On one hand, people do not become convinced of their indigeness just by receiving information about indigenous rights. The meaning of the different topics discussed previously influence this decision. The political meaning they incorporate to land, history, and culture also influences this decision. On the other hand, they receive information from people of

the region, who are Indians as well. They have known members of CITA for years; they have also engaged together in different forms of struggle to defend their lands and rights. In other words, they perceive them as their *parentes* with whom they share a common history, origin, and a particular position from which they experience the world. This establishes a big difference in terms of the meanings behind belonging to the indigenous movement. Contrasted with other forms of affiliation such as the fishing or rural workers unions, where association depends primarily on economic contribution ruled by external agents, the indigenous movement was created, ruled, and defined by them and the people with whom they share the Tapajós-Arapium region. This in turn, helps the Arapium and Jaraqui to raise political consciousness that emphasized two aspects: renewed pride of being Indian, and political action to achieve improvements of their lives by securing their homelands and getting access to governmental services.

When we get together in meetings or encounters we always use our necklaces, we paint our body, and do our rituals...that is important for us, because we can show our identity. When a White comes to our villages and see us painted, they can perceive our Indian identity...I feel happy when people look at me and recognize that I am an Indian. That makes me feel proud of being *índio mesmo*.

Beth Conklin (Conklin 1997) asserts that, in indigenous identity politics, exotic body images play an important role in defining Indian identity and authenticity. They are also emblematic ways of proud assertion of ethnic identity. For this author, that people who previously hid external signs of indigenusness behind Western clothing later proclaim their cultural distinctiveness with body adornments, is a clear indication of the use of Western values and codes that defined authenticity to validate their indigenous identity. Visual images for the Arapiuma and Jaraqui represent a way to negotiate their identity and mark distinction from other neighboring non-indigenous peoples. Body painting that previously did not have much value among them is now renewed as a crucial mark of indigenusness, especially when negotiations

with governmental organizations take place. Then, exotic images help to display their Indian identity and influence others' perceptions about their indigenusness; they also contribute to providing more value to collective identity.

Through the indigenous movement, they also have the opportunity to discuss their history, memories, concerns, and needs. Land constitutes the main material and symbolic concern through which the collective struggle is oriented. In the region, the promotion of economic development through the expansion of the agricultural frontier with soybean production has generated great concern among rural and indigenous communities. The struggle for land includes access to services such education and health.

Some people are causing deforestation, but the government has not worried about or for the people living in the area. Those people have done a bad thing, created conflicts, and have even killed people in the *Gleba Nova Olinda*, which is located in the high part of the Arapiuns River. I knew they were deforesting the area to take the wood and plant soybean.

We hope that with the demarcation of our land, everything is going to be peaceful. We struggle for land demarcation to end the risk of losing our lands...with the demarcation the Whites cannot enter our lands, because like those *grileiros*⁴, soybean producers, and private loggers they constitute a big threat for us.

What is good about being part of the indigenous movement is that we have access to education, health, and even some economic resources....also, now wherever Indians go they receive better service; in public offices, they receive special attention just because Indians have that right.

Indigenous rights and in particular land rights generate concerns and debates not only among local/national governments and private companies with interest in indigenous land, but also among indigenous movements in Brazil and Latin America. According to Victor Toledo (2005), indigenous territories are not just rights claimed; they are a lived reality that contains symbolic meanings and acts of resistance by indigenous movements. In this sense, land rights

⁴ In Portuguese *grilagem* refers to the illegal seizure and appropriation of public lands. This constitutes a type of pattern of land concentration in Brazil (Sauer 2005). *Grileiros* are the people who advance in the region and take over the lands of indigenous people and other rural residents.

claims do not constitute a mere legal and politico-administrative process, they intend to defend and re-vitalize peoples' ethnic identity and the collective spaces of social and cultural production and reproduction. On the other hand, the collective action implies deep transformations in the excluding forms of social organization. Indigenous people claim not only their land, but also the rights to education and other services from which they were previously excluded. In fact, since 2004, with the creation of the coordination of the indigenous education in the municipality, CITA managed to include one of its members as coordinator of this office. This facilitates negotiations to recognize 30 schools of the area as indigenous school and secure special benefits through this status (CITA www.cita.org.br consulted 2 February 2008). Through this section, I have explored and put together the individual notions of the meanings of Arapium and Jaraqui identity. In the next part of this chapter, I present analysis of a collective discussion about notions of identity, land, and indigenous rights.

Changing Meanings of Indigenous Identity

In the narratives of the Arapium and Jaraqui people referencing issues of identity, they commonly expressed three major concepts throughout the interviews and oral histories. These were a) *índio mesmo* (as having an Indian descent), b) Indians have more rights than Whites, and c) Land demarcation contributes to rescue Indian culture. To get peoples' common understanding of these notions and to let the Arapium and Jaraqui interpret and get new insights into how they recount their life experience, I developed a focus group discussion (Figure 4-16). The focus group helped me to understand how the different meanings of their identity varied according to context. This part of the chapter presents the analysis of the discussion carried out by a group of indigenous Arapium and Jaraqui who voluntarily participated in the focus group. To guide the discussion, participants answered three questions that addressed each of the ideas above.

The Political Meaning of “*Indio Mesmo*”

The concept of *índio mesmo* in the semi-structured interviews refers to genealogical descent from an Indian ancestor. Through this term, the interviewees tried to demonstrate their continuity as indigenous people. To initiate the debate, I asked the participants to analyze the concept of *índio mesmo* contrasted with the notion of *índio misturado*. Although the last term was not explicitly used in the narratives, it was implied when they talked about the processes of cultural/ racial mixture and the changes they experienced. In the interviews, the implicit concept of *índio misturado* does not constitute an opposed condition to true Indian or *índio mesmo*. In the anthropological perspective, *índio misturado* refers to an acculturated Indian (Galvão 1979; Ribeiro 1996) whose cultural distinctiveness barely differs from national society (Oliveira 1999). Pacheco de Oliveira argues that this term, frequently used in the official documents of Brazilian indigenist institutions, applied a series of negative attributes that disqualified or opposed mixed Indians compared to those considered as true or authentic Indians (1999). This in turn served to question or denied legal recognition of indigenous status and related rights to culturally mixed groups.

The group debate on this concept concluded with a very different notion from those implied either in the interviews or in the anthropological literature. In the context of this collective analysis, *índio mesmo* refers to a person who asserts his/her indigenous identity without shame, no matter what the circumstances and location are. *Indio mesmo* is the person who stands up and struggles for his/her rights. This is a person that possesses an Indian consciousness and uses it for the benefit of his group (*povo*) and the indigenous movement. *Indio misturado* on the other hand, appeared in opposition to *índio mesmo* as an individual who felt ashamed of being Indian and who did not assert or defend his/her identity. This type of

person would turn to White or Indian according to the circumstances. *Índio misturado* is an Indian that cannot be trusted.

The dichotomous relationship created here between *índio mesmo* and *índio misturado* contains the notions of “the true self and the false selves” that constitute the logic of the language of identity (Hall 1997:42). Through this true-false dichotomy, *índio mesmo* acquired a privileged status that they use to distinguish among individuals and identities. *Índio mesmo* appears as a collective definition and approval of what it is to be an “authentic” Indian. Authenticity here is a social convention reconstructed through interaction and experience (Cornell and Hartmann 1998). One can say then, that the concept of *índio mesmo* complies a political function; it guarantees the reproduction of practices and behaviors necessary for the political struggle that seeks the recognition of their Indian status and their rights. In this sense, the *índio mesmo* is the individual who can represent and speak for their people and the indigenous movement.

“Um Direito Mais Um”: A Concept of Indigenous Rights

During the interviews, the idea that indigenous people have more rights than the Whites, frequently appeared. For the group discussion, participants were asked to explain this idea. They explained it using the phrase “*um direito mais um*” meaning that indigenous people accrue the special rights to land and its resources and the basic rights that all citizens of a nation have. Related to land rights, they stressed the original rights to land that are based on the concept of “original inhabitants” or as they put it “natives of the forest.” This concept is coherent with what they expressed in the interviews.

I wish to examine here one notion that appears in this discussion, indigenous citizenship rights. According to Alcida Ramos (2003), in Brazil there is an ambivalent notion of citizenship when applied to indigenous people. This ambivalence can generate difficulties as well as

advantages. As she explains, to be Indian in Brazil means to be formally dependent on the state and subject to patronizing attitudes. Indigenous citizenship guarantees certain services such as health, education, or retirement benefits without standard obligations. In practice, access to state services and protection of indigenous peoples' basic human rights are limited and differentiated. Systematic threats to their life, livelihoods, social, and cultural rights are permanent. In the case of the Arapium and Jaraqui people, the idea of enjoying full citizenship rights is problematic. On one hand, they have not enjoyed full and permanent access to state services. On the other hand, because of the lack of legal recognition, they still maintain obligations as any other Brazilian citizen. The idea of having full citizenship rights constituted more a political goal that the groups try to secure and legitimize through the legal recognition of their indigenous ethnicities.

Land Demarcation Legitimizes but does not Guarantee Indigenous Rights

The third discussion focused on how land demarcation contributes to maintain their Indian culture, but turned then to protection of indigenous rights. The main idea expressed was that with land demarcation the protection of their rights to land, its resources and reproduction of cultural traditions are legitimized but not guaranteed. The explanation of this comes on one side, from the permanent threat of invasion by external agents, such as colonists and illegal loggers. The other comes from the threats created by the government itself when it approves development projects within Indian lands without their participation in this decision. According to their discussion, the mere existence of indigenous rights should be the guarantee to enjoy them.

However, the privilege of exercising these rights is conditioned to the fulfillment of the governmental administrative process of land demarcation. According to the participants, the rights to schooling, health services, and maintenance of cultural traditions should be guaranteed without the implementation of this administrative action. Nevertheless, participants recognized they would have a better chance to protect their territories from external threats with the

demarcation. These threats constitute the main reason recognition of their lands and territories became a priority and an essential aspect of their struggle for recognition. Demarcation of their lands is more than an administrative process of securing tenure rights. It is primarily a form to secure their right to determine their own identity and to practice, protect, and develop their cultural heritage. This means in general, that their struggle for recognition will not end with the demarcation of their territories. The privilege of having full recognition of their rights and long-term benefits as indigenous people would constitute a permanent goal for the improvement of their position, autonomy, and participation in national and international societies (Brysk 2000). The establishment of local and international alliances with indigenous organizations, governments, and NGOs becomes an important step in this goal.

Conclusions

Throughout this Chapter, I examined the different symbolic, material, and political sources that served to construct the meaning of being Arapium and Jaraqui Indians. The claims of indigenous identities showed that the sense of indigenusness has a primordial dimension in the sense that it has passed through different cycles through time; it has been hidden, forgotten, remembered, and reappeared with new meanings in a different socio-cultural context. The forces that drive this variation are linked to the historical process that generated patterns of changes and opportunities to re-emerge. This is what Cornell and Hartmann defined as “Constructed primordiality” (1998:89), which refers to the power that ethnic sentiment seems to have, which increases through intimate shared experiences and interactions that connect people to the past. The power of ethnicity in this case lies in the variable significance the Arapium and Jaraqui apply to their identity. In other words, this variable significance is constructed through interaction and historical experience.

The Arapium and Jaraqui identities are also the product of the circumstances that make them mobilize and engage in a political struggle for the re-definition of their position in the society as indigenous people. Their political struggle combines the different meanings of their identity with the existing legal framework to protect indigenous rights. The variety of themes found throughout the interviews demonstrated that the construction of indigenous identity is a complex and dynamic process that requires permanent interpretation. The significance of each of the themes varied not only according to circumstances, but also to reinterpretation of who they were, who they are, and who they would become.

The meanings of the Arapium and Jaraqui ethnicities evolved from the same historical conditions that brought the two groups to experience radical changes, cultural mixture, discrimination, stigmatization, and social exclusion. However, in the process of constructing their identities, they applied different values to the material and symbolic sources they used to construct the meaning of their ethnicities. For the Arapium, the land and river as socio-cultural and historical places are associated with the memory they have about their ancestors. They constitute the land of the Arapium, which legitimizes their sense of Arapium ethnicity. For the Arapium, where they live (the Arapium landscape) represents what they are. A similar phenomenon has been found among the Langalanpa Indians of Solomon islands, which use the landscape as a marker of their ethnic identity through the establishment of kinship relations and the use of resources from landscape for subsistence (Steward and Strathen 2003). For the Jaraqui, the significance of the river and its resources (the jaraqui fish) as a basis of subsistence is what provides the foundation for their ethnicity. In this sense, what they eat (the jaraqui fish) represents what they are. This made Arapium and Jaraqui Indians different from each other; they

do not constitute one group; they recognize each other as belonging to two different ethnic groups.

In what has been expressed by the different indigenous groups affiliated to CITA, there is a recurrent strategy to support their claims for recognition. I refer to the essentialization of their identity. One of these features is the definition of their identity in terms of their close relationship with their land. In the case of the Arapium and Jaraqui Indians, this is clearly expressed through the notion of rootedness, in which ideas of place of origin, attachment, historical experience of place, territory, and subsistence serve to stress their intimate relationship with the land. The essentialization of their identity as rooted in the land constitutes a key notion in their ethno political struggle. It is of critical importance for the Arapium and Jaraqui peoples because the essentialization of their identity contributes not only to represent what they are, but also to respond to Western traditional notions of what indigenous peoples are. On one hand, indigenous people have traditionally been conceived as rooted in specific location and dependent on their homelands and resources for subsistence. In international legal frameworks that protect the rights of indigenous peoples, land is conceived as central to their lives. It is the basis for their economic survival, spiritual well-being, and cultural identity. For example, the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples in its articles 25 and 26 stresses the right of indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their lands; the right to the lands, resources, and territories traditionally occupied and used; the right to own, use, and control their land and territories; and, the right to legal recognition and protection of their land and territories (UN 2007). The assertion of indigenous rights to land and resources is taken to be vital to their survival and identity. At the national level, in the process of land demarcation,

the link that indigenous peoples have with their territory constitutes one of the aspects to be analyzed by the GTs for the basis of definition of the area of indigenous lands.

Although this strategy may provide favorable results for their recognition and protection of their lands, this type of essentialist definitions of identity may become a form of “confinement” (Malkki 1992) of their identity to particular a place. This is not to say, that the Arapiuma and Jaraqui would not be Indians outside their particular lands; they have demonstrated that they have a vision of their territory beyond the limits of their communities, enough pride to express their identity outside of their indigenous lands, and diverse forms of transmitting their memories and sense of indigeness to future generations. However, in terms of legal definition of indigenous lands, this essentialization may also become a useful source for people opposed to their claims. What I meant is that the idea of an identity confined in a demarcated area can be used as justification for the reduction of the geographical space to be defined as indigenous lands and territories. This is especially true in a context of land competition such as the Santarém region. In the next chapter, I will discuss the competing discourses and interests for land and natural resources in the lower Tapajos region and the way essentialist notion of indigenous people and their environment are used to contest indigenous peoples’ claims to land.

Table 4-1. Themes and categories that emerged from the interviews

| Theoretical theme | Focus coding | # |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Sense of rootedness | Subsistence | 47 |
| | Place of origin | 37 |
| | Attachment to land | 31 |
| | Perception and experience of land | 17 |
| | Territoriality | 13 |
| | TOTAL | 145 |
| Historical Memory | Indian descent | 30 |
| | Experiencing Indian culture | 25 |
| | Family Memories | 21 |
| | Authenticity | 16 |
| | Local History | 10 |
| | TOTAL | 102 |
| Historical Transformation | Racial-cultural mixture | 20 |
| | Enforced assimilation | 14 |
| | Differentiating from ancestors | 11 |
| | Other | 2 |
| | TOTAL | 47 |
| Consciousness | Rising consciousness | 31 |
| | Indian pride | 19 |
| | Restrictive knowledge | 19 |
| | Acquiring knowledge | 13 |
| | TOTAL | 82 |
| Social Exclusion | Indian stigma | 36 |
| | Discrimination | 18 |
| | Hidden Identity | 11 |
| | other | 2 |
| | TOTAL | 67 |
| Identity Politics | Indigenous movement Influence | 39 |
| | Securing land | 28 |
| | land struggle | 22 |
| | Symbolic representation | 21 |
| | Indigenous rights | 19 |
| | Access & allocation of resources | 18 |
| | Imposed decision | 4 |
| | Other | 3 |
| | TOTAL | 154 |

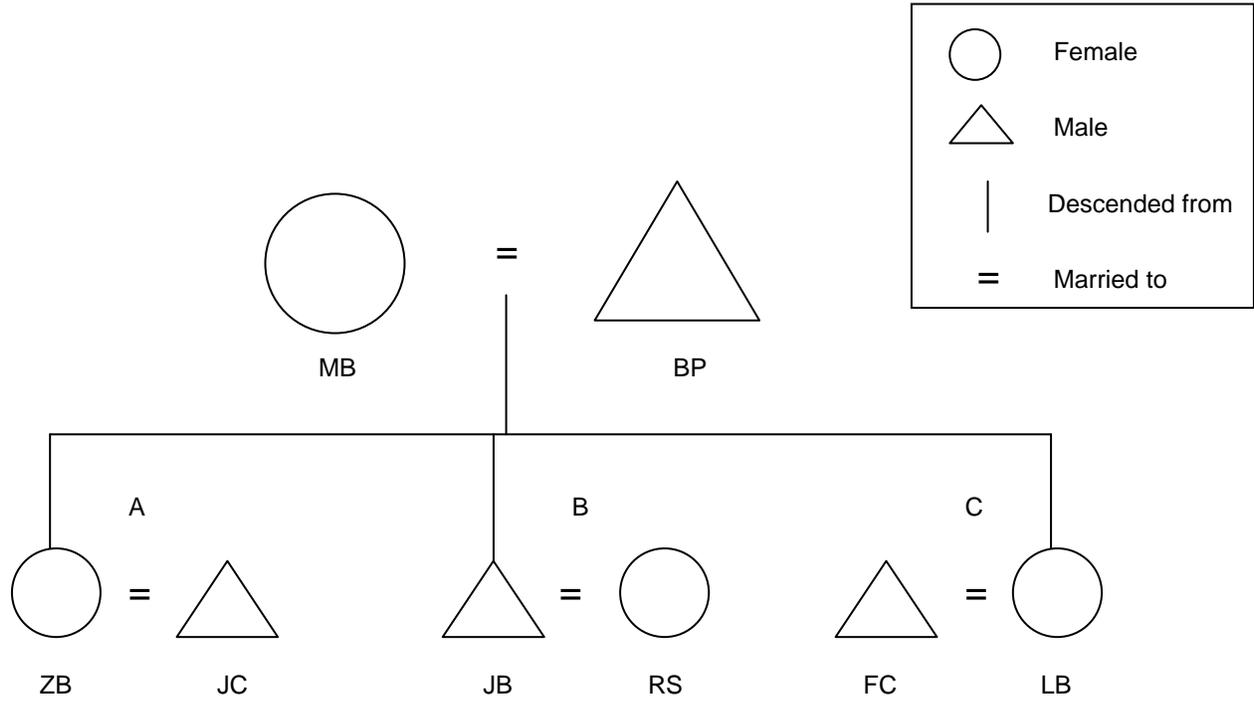


Figure 4-1. The main families descendants of Maria Balboa and Benizio Perez. A) Zeneida Balboa-Julio Soriano. B) José Balboa-Raissa da Silva. C) Fernando Carvalho and Lucinete Balboa.



Figure 4-2. *Cacique* of Lago da Praia



Figure 4-3. Members of the Balboa family



Figure 4-4. Lucinete Balboa



Figure 4-5. Fernando Carvalho (left) with his older son.

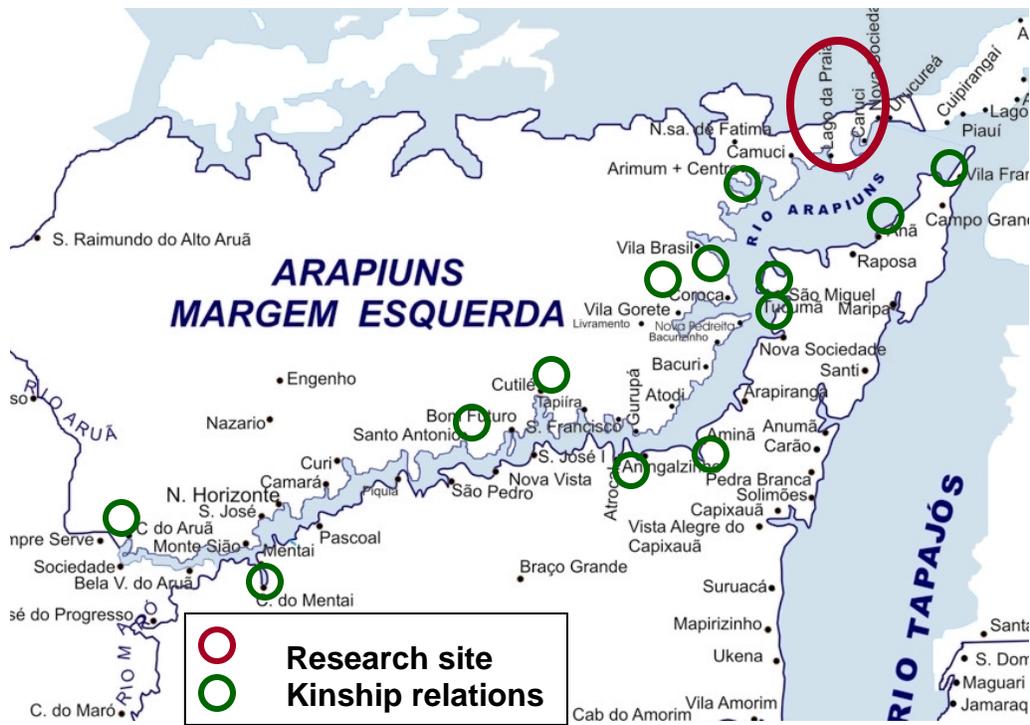


Figure 4-6. Sketch of the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns region showing location of the Lago da Praia and Caruci and the communities where Arapium and Jaraqui Indians have kinship relations. Sketch source: www.saudeealegria.org.br



Figure 4-9. Jaraqui Indians in the final process of *farinha* production



Figure 4-10. View of the Arapiuns River, *aldeia* of Caruci



Figure 4-11. River Arapiuns, *aldeia* Lago da Praia



Figure 4-12. A group of fishermen of the *aldeia* of Caruci.



Figure 4-13. Collective fishing



Figure 4-14. Jaraqui fish

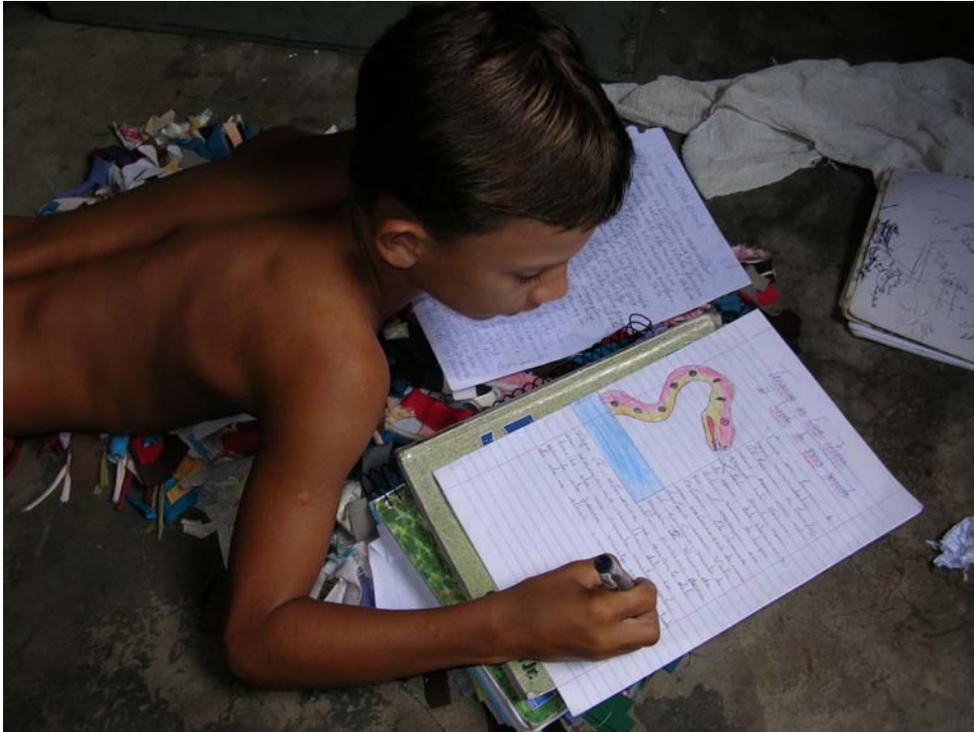


Figure 4-15. A Jaraqui child writing the story of Merandolino Cobra Grande



Figure 4-16. Participants of the focus group analysis

CHAPTER 5
STRUGGLING IN A LANDSCAPE OF MULTIPLE AND CONFLICTING VOICES

Ethnopolitics as a Two-Way Strategy

Through the two previous chapters, I have discussed why and how people from the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns region came to see themselves as indigenous people, and the material and symbolic means used by the Arapium and Jaraqui Indians to construct the meaning of their identity. This chapter examines the practices through which the indigenous movement becomes a socio-political actor within a landscape of global economic and environmental concerns. My purpose is to offer a reflection on the local-global interactions and encounters of diverse and conflicting actors and the implications in defining and claiming indigenous identity. I show how identity construction and the formation of the indigenous movement is not a case confined to indigenous villages.

The Arapium, Jaraqui, and all other indigenous people belonging to CITA (Indigenous Council Tapajós-Arapiuns) did not struggle for their rights in isolation. They find themselves struggling for acceptance within a highly politicized geographical context, the Amazon region, in which local, national, and international interests converge. This case is immersed in ongoing economic, social, and environmental discussions that proposed two major actions in the region: economic development and conservation practices. The former is envisioned through the consolidation of the soybean industry and the improvement of the transportation system, and the latter through the protection and sustainable management of tropical rain forest. Within these two forces, the indigenous movement struggles to voice its claims at national and international levels and encounters further difficulties and opportunities as well.

Worldwide, Amazonia constitutes one of the most significant and powerful current symbols of environmentalism. Amazonia is not only a living place that contributes to the

subsistence and cultural reproduction of rural and indigenous communities, but also a valuable potential resource for the global market. In this sense, Amazonia constitutes a contested place, in which multiple development interests converge and compete. Within this arena of power relations and globalizing development, the indigenous movement has opened space to accommodate its rights claims and has moved beyond their geographical frontiers to become an issue of wide public awareness and debates.

The Argument

The analysis presented here focuses on ethno-political action¹ and explores it as a two-way strategy. With this, I mean the use of the historical and socio-political discourses that support not only the rights claims of indigenous peoples, but also the contesting arguments against these claims by other social agents (e.g. the general public, governmental, and development and environmental actors). I want to show that the political use of the meanings of an ethnic identity is not an exclusive discursive strategy of indigenous peoples to seek gains or solutions to the problems faced by their collectivity. Non-indigenous actors also use their own conceptions of what indigenous peoples are, to legitimize their argument in favor or against indigenous rights claims. What I want to highlight in this context of development and environmental disputes is how non-indigenous actors used essentialist notions of Amazonian indigenous peoples and their forest landscape to support their claims, and to question changes perceived in both the Amazonian rainforest and indigenous peoples. I argue that there is a parallel between the values given to them in terms of the historical changes experienced in the constitution of the Amazonian rainforest and in indigenous identities. In the economic development discourse, I explore how

¹ Gurr defines ethno-political action as “any organized activity in pursuit of the groups’ objectives” (2000:69). Brysk (2000) explains identity politics as the use of identity for movement mobilization and the politicization of cultural practices.

the notion of change is appropriate to legitimize the expansion of a more profitable activity (i.e., soy cultivation in this case) into certain Amazon forest areas considered to have changed too much to contain biodiversity and/or cultural values. Similarly, I show how the application of the notion of change to indigenous peoples of mixed descent has been used to question their indigenusness and their rights claims, because they are considered to have changed too much to be “authentic” Indians.

To develop the analysis, I focus on the tensions and contradictions generated from a series of public demonstrations that took place between May and July of 2006 in the city of Santarém. These events started in May during the annual celebration of Labor Day. The public demonstrations congregated, on one side, diverse groups of the civil society including the indigenous movement, and national and international environmental organizations such as Greenpeace, to protest deforestation in the Amazon, expansion of agro-business frontier, and the establishment of a soybean export terminal in Santarém by the multinational company Cargill. On the other side, local and national farmers, merchants, and the local government congregated to defend the prosperity and economic development brought by the soybean industry. The latter group also protested against the intervention of international environmental NGOs in decisions regarding the economic development of the region. Particularly, the intervention of Greenpeace was contested, arguing issues of national sovereignty.

Methods

The analysis is based on my field ethnographic experience as participant observer of these events, field notes, discussions and informal conversations with members of CITA and other laypeople. I also used materials from local newspapers that documented the events. Participant observation is considered the basic research technique of anthropology, through which anthropologists collect data about the things we experience in the field, the things we see and

hear in natural settings, and the interactions with the people about whom we do research and their socio-cultural surroundings (Bernard 2002; Clifford and Marcus 1986; DeWalt and DeWalt 2001). Participant observation helps to construct mutual understandings of the situations experienced in the field with our research objects. It as well helps to situate our observations in the social context in which the research and the people we work with are immersed (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). Intricate forms of relationships between people and their socio-cultural contexts that are not included in research planning can become crucial issues of analysis. This is what happened to me, what appeared, at first glance, as a non-related issue to my research objectives, became a matter of critical importance for the understanding of the socio-political context in which the claims for indigenous recognition were embedded.

My personal reflection while writing my field notes (about my casual interactions with the different actors) revealed that I was facing something more complex than an annual celebration in which indigenous peoples wanted to participate. My own ethnographic experience while being a participant observer allowed me to integrate the voices of the indigenous movement as active agents with my own reflection of the events. The events I witnessed, the conversations I heard and participated in as well as the excitements, worries, and passions I perceived and experienced were crucial to comprehend the importance of incorporating these as part of the data that support the analysis of this study. More important was the fact that for the members of CITA these events constituted important spaces to represent themselves and voice their claims in a broad audience. I realized that these were important facts because the arguments I heard in the public demonstrations and conversations with the different actors expressed essentialist conceptions of the Amazon landscape and its people. In general, the discursive appeal of each group, the environmentalists and development agents, uses the notion of biophysical and cultural

change to support their arguments in favor or against each other. These contra-arguments, at the same time, expressed essentialist conceptions of indigenous peoples as bounded, “stagnant,” and “static” communities that do not participate in global society and economy.

By presenting the different perspectives involved in the public demonstrations, I want to highlight the position of the indigenous movement, its invisibility and visibility, and the contradictory discourses that accompanied the claims of the diverse actors. More important, I want to show how these events affected the indigenous movement’s internal ability to face conflicting situations and reorganize strategies of struggle. The chapter develops as follows: first, I present a background of the context in which the area of Santarém came to constitute a key region for economic development and conservation projects. I continue with a description of events, an analysis of conservationists and development arguments, and an analysis of the way CITA positions itself in the region and deals with the situations experienced.

Santarém the Center of Development and Environmental Disputes

In terms of modernization and economic development plans, the municipality of Santarém constitutes one of the key areas for the integration of the Amazon region into the national economy. Since the 1970s with the establishment of the National Development Plan², the area was envisioned as the “Third door to be opened to conquer the Amazon” (Rebelo 1973:111). The strategic geographical location of Santarém, between the two major cities of economic development of the region, Manaus and Belém, and in the confluence of the Tapajós and Amazon Rivers, made of it a crucial area of integration. Since that time, two major development projects were proposed to achieve this goal, the opening of the BR-163 Cuiabá-Santarém

² The National Development Plan (PND in Portuguese), proposed the integration of the Amazon region into the national economy by promoting private and public investment in areas of economic potential. The Plan expected to expand and consolidate the national industry, opening new channels of internal commerce, and consolidate national sovereignty over the region (Loureiro 2004; Schmink and Wood 1992).

highway and the construction of a port in the city of Santarém. These projects were expected to consolidate the transportation systems in the area to facilitate integration to market economy and to receive the benefit of progress (Rebelo 1973). The significance of the port and highway relied, in this sense, on their potential to economically develop a vast area rich in minerals, natural resources, and land considered “empty” in demography terms.

In general, the Amazon region was conceived as a frontier area to be conquered and occupied by social and economic actors that would incorporate new uses and values to land and the natural resources it contains (Loureiro 2004; Castro 2001; Schmink and Wood 1992). Weber and Rausch (1994) point out that the term frontier holds different meanings that go beyond the notion of boundary between settled and unsettled areas or the edge of “civilization” as it advances into “wilderness.” The term also contains ideological meaning and represents both geographical zones and the process of interaction among distinctive cultures. Frontier has played significant roles in shaping national identities and institution while providing opportunities for upward social mobility as in the case of United States. Wild or “free land” on the North American frontier is said to have inspired national democracy and freedom in the United States (Tsing 2005; Weber and Rausch 1994). Latin America has historically experienced different waves of frontier stages most of them related to frontier economies. Weber and Rausch define them as tributary frontiers, cattle frontiers, agricultural frontiers, and commercial frontiers, in which different actors and modes of social-economic organizations have competed with one another. The work by Schmink and Wood (1992) present a detailed portrayal of the process of development frontier expansion into the Amazonia during 1970s and 1980s and the military and civilian governmental policies that promoted this expansion. Their analysis highlights several forms of social conflicts generated in the region, such as conflict over public lands, establishment

of cattle ranching and its pressure over forest areas, and the impact of gold rush. The expansion of the development frontier generated as well social changes and resistance, evidenced in the transformation of the structure of the regional economy and in the constitution of new actors and patterns of social mobilization. They define frontier as “the physical edge of a settled area and to the battle lines that mark the confrontation between competing claims” (Schmink and Wood 1992:19). That is, the competing claims and definitions of control and uses of Amazonian natural resources.

By the late 1980s, the accelerated destruction of the world’s tropical rainforests including the Amazon, became evident and a worldwide environmental movement emerged as an important alternative to world politics to contain this devastation (Little 2001). Development initiatives in the Amazon region generated worldwide concerns about deforestation and the negative affects on local and indigenous peoples’ cultural traditions and land rights, which brought into consideration new ideas about development. Conceptions of sustainability reached national and international debates, and policies aimed at the integration of conservation and development efforts that would provide social justice while preserving the biological diversity of tropical forest. Environmental projects that promoted greater participation of local communities in natural resources management and emphasized the need of a more equitable shared cost of biodiversity conservation became the new paradigm of conservation practices. In this framework, the role and rights of indigenous people in the management and protection of tropical forest gained international interests and support. Environmental advocacy networks constituted crucial factors through which international campaigns against deforestation in the Amazon were channeled (Conklin and Graham 1995; Alcorn 1993). As agricultural, cattle rancher, and colonization expansion devastated the Amazon region, Brazilian Indians and

environmentalists found common cause in their struggle against destructive dams, roads, and mines in defense of the rights of indigenous peoples (Brysk 2000; Little 2001).

In the current global context, the economic and political value of Amazonia situates it as a strategic and crucial region to consolidate the commercial leadership of Brazil throughout the South American region. Edna Castro (2001) asserts that in terms of geopolitics, Amazonia as a frontier has acquired a new political role defined by its capacity to expand and consolidate the competitiveness of the national market economy beyond the limits of the country. The development concept that guides the integration of the Amazon region into the national and global economy does not differ much from the experience of the 1970s. The new concept is still based on the idea of the existence of abundant natural resources of great potential for investment, and opening of new channels for national and international markets. In the current national development plan, *Plano Pluriannual Avança Brazil*, improvement of a transportation system that connects to the north of the country is considered strategically important to facilitate markets in Asia and Europe (Goldsmith and Hirsch 2006). Besides this strategy, advances in biotechnology and incentives to agro-industry constitute the pillars of development intervention.

In this new wave of economic development, Santarém constitutes one of the most promising and controversial agricultural frontiers of the country. The rapid expansion of soy farming accompanied the paving of the BR-163 that is intended to consolidate the export corridor for soybeans via the Amazon River increased global concerns of rapid deforestation and substantial environmental and social effects (Fearnside 2007; Goldsmith and Hirsch 2006). This as well, raises concerns about the effects of global warming and climate change (Nepstad et al. 2008). Brazil is currently the second leading soybean producer in the world. Amazonia has attracted soy producers because the land is relatively available and cheap.

To be profitable soybeans are cultivated only at large scale, which means that expansion will not benefit small-scale farmers. Besides, there is the concern that large-scale farmers would force local peasants away from their lands and *grileiros* or land thieves who appropriate areas in fraudulent ways would be stimulated to claim lands. In addition, the construction of the Cargill soybean export terminal, which started functioning in 2003 without completing the Brazilian environmental-license system, the Environmental Impact Study (EIA) and the Report of Environmental Impacts (RIMA), complicated the scenario. Competing discourses in favor and against the projects are at stake. The government, soybean producers, and transporters have viewed the paving and the expansion of soybean farming positively. Their arguments go beyond economic prosperity and employment opportunities to assure that soy farming expansion has no significant environmental threats to Amazonia since it expands only into savannas and previously converted lands (Brown et al. 2005). For instance, in 2004 the Ministry of Agriculture estimated that Santarém has approximately 500-600,000 hectares of anthropogenic forest that can be converted to agriculture (Escobar 2004). Environmentalists, on their side, argue that technological advances have not only allowed soybean to expand into new climate regions, but also created pressures to clear new forest areas (Soares-Filho et al. 2006).

On the other hand, the projected paving of the BR-163, indeed, has greatly increased deforestation in the surrounding areas and motivated colonization as has occurred in other parts of Brazil (Fearnside 2007). A working group was created to debate the direct and indirect impacts of the highway paving and alternatives to construct a sustainable development model in the region. Participants in this group included environmental organizations and representatives of the 84 municipalities of the states of Mato Grosso and Pará impacted by the BR-163. Among other things, this group identified as a priority the creation and consolidation of protected areas,

regularization of existing agrarian reform settlements, support to family agriculture and sustainable activities, and improvement of infrastructure services (IPAM 2004). Between 2004 and 2006, 23 million hectares of protected areas were created including those along the pathways of the agricultural frontier (Nepstad et al. 2008).

Although in this new wave of economic development, the lower Amazonia was not necessarily seen as an uninhabited region, the presence of an indigenous movement in the area of Santarém, was not expected. In this complex context of development and environmentalist discussions, the presence of CITA as a new political actor with its own agenda, the claims for land demarcation and recognition of indigenous status, took by surprise and generated concerns among environmentalist and governmental institutions. Unlike the support that indigenous people in other areas of Brazil obtained during the 1980s and 1990s, this indigenous movement has gained little support. Instead they were scrutinized because their presence complicated the scenario of negotiations and environmental and development planning. Besides, questions about their cultural and racial mixture constituted critical issues from which oppositions to their rights claims are based. Certainly, essentialist assumptions of indigenosity that do not allow for the recognition of multiple ancestral heritage and life experience among groups of mixed descent guide this questioning. Markers of traditional authenticity that emphasizes wilderness and unchanged culture are what dominant society expects for indigenous peoples' definition. Within these practical dilemmas and ambiguities, CITA struggles to voice the needs and the historical and cultural rights of its people. How do the apparently contradictory discourses and concerns of development, conservation, and indigenous rights intersect? How does CITA open the path to consolidate its presence in the region and in the global landscape? What are the difficulties and

opportunities that CITA faces? In the next section, I present the events through which I intend to address the above questions.

Becoming Involved in National and International Environmental Campaigns

On April 27, in one of my frequent visits to the CITA office in Santarém, I heard some Indians discussing the slogans to be presented by the indigenous movement in a public demonstration against the deforestation in the Amazon. They explained to me that the demonstration was going to take place on May 1, the day when the Labor Day is celebrated. The *Frente em Defesa da Amazonia*³ (FDA) coordinated the demonstration. The slogan of the campaign was “*Na amazonia a impunidade mata e desmata*” (Impunity kills and deforests in the Amazon). The campaign intended to protest deforestation, social injustice, and establishment of multinational companies, such as Cargill and large-scale soy farmers that have deteriorated the Amazon region. CITA was expecting participation by the different indigenous groups and communities associated with the organization. In effect, the day of the demonstration, Indian representatives of the Tapajós and Arapiuns area arrived. They got together to finish a manifesto of the indigenous movement to be read during the gathering at the central plaza of the city (see Appendix A). Once finished, the coordinator of CITA called a meeting to review the manifesto and made recommendations for their participation in the march, and in the gathering (Figures 5-1). He did this as prevention against the threats that organizers of the public activity received, apparently from soybean producers and cattle ranchers. Although they were worried, they were also excited, painted their bodies and organized their traditional clothes to wear for the public

³ The FDA is a social movement of the West of Pará which groups several grassroots organizations, environmental NGOs, research and educational institutions such as Pastoral Social, Associação de Mulheres Trabalhadoras do Baixo Amazonas (AMTBAM), Centro de Apoio aos Projetos de ações Comunitarias (CEAPAC), Associação de Mulheres Domesticas, Sindicato dos Trabalhadores/as Rurais STTR, União Estudiantes de Nível Superior, Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT), Comissão Justiça e Paz (JP), Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazonia (IPAM), Instituto Socio-Ambiental (ISA), Universidade Federal do Para, UFPA, and Greenpeace, among others. CITA is member since 2003. The FDA joins efforts to protest deforestation and social injustice in the Amazon region.

event (Figures 5-2, 5-3). They clearly wanted to be identified as Indians. During our walk by the dike along the Tapajós River to the central plaza, people in the street stopped to see us; some of them asked me who they were, and where they were going. I gave a short explanation and then some people joined us, but others preferred to insult the group saying, “If you are Indians, so, you are savages!” “You are fake Indians, true Indians go naked!” “Indians live in the deep forest, go back!” Despite this aggression, the group continued without responding to any of the offensive comments. During the gathering at the plaza, cattle ranchers and soy producers arrived and intended to destroy the demonstration by provoking indigenous people to fight. Members of the indigenous group stayed together forming a circle dancing and singing while soy farmers yelled at them, “Indians are lazy and do not work the land” “land is for those who work it!”

The situation described evidenced essentialists understanding of indigenous peoples. The arguments expressed against the indigenous movement bring back older dichotomies, such as pristine-acculturated, authentic-fake, and traditional-modern through which the farmers and merchants questioned the authenticity of indigenous peoples. In this essentialist conception, Indians are defined in terms of a set of essences that include nakedness, savageness, primitiveness, and laziness. By conceiving indigenous people in essentialist terms, soy producer and merchants justified the repertoires that question the changes experienced in indigenous cultures and social formation. Dean and Levi (2003:14) explain that essentialist assumptions about the nature of indigenous people are dominated by images of the past, in which indigenous cultures are conceive as “trapped in a sort of freeze-frame;” that is, as a static and non-progressive socio-cultural entity. In this sense, the essentialist conception of indigenous peoples became crucial in a context of contestation over access to and allocation of resources. In this case, an essentialist conception serves to challenge the presence and claims of indigenous

peoples' rights to the land, a land that is envisioned by development actors as an agricultural frontier to be opened and appropriated.

Although the demonstration at the plaza gathered about 500 people, the reports in the local newspapers presented the event as a failure (Figure 5-4). In a note accompanied by a picture, a local newspaper indicates, "at the demonstration, *índios* were present." The report also questioned the support the international NGO Greenpeace gave to the social movement and demonstration (Santos 2006a). Greenpeace has engaged in an ongoing campaign to protect the Amazon rainforest from the different forces of destruction. For Greenpeace, "Amazon represents the last remote and pristine forest on our distressed and overcrowded planet" that contains some of the most diverse ecosystems in the planet. The rainforest is mainly a repository of biological diversity, a "green treasure," and a sustainable management area that needs to be regulated by green certification (Greenpeace 2008). Conceived in essentialist terms, as an ancient and pristine forest, the Amazonian rainforest became one of the pillars of international environmental campaigns of the NGO. In 2006, the NGO published the report "Eating up the Amazon," which shows the link between soybean supply chains of leading international food companies (Cargill and MacDonald's) and deforestation (Greenpeace 2006). In general, the report asserts that the rise in international demand for soy had led farmers to open new forest areas for soybean cultivation. By making alliances with the government, soy traders, and civil society, the NGO has led the campaign to pressure soy producers and buyers to decrease deforestation and concentrate cultivation in forest areas already opened. Indigenous peoples and other forest dwellers constitute some of the allies in this campaign.

Indigenous peoples' claims have been increasingly expressed in conservation initiatives, through which concerns for subsistence and cultural survival have been articulated to global

concerns for the destruction of the tropical rainforest and its worldwide effects. Although the connections between these concerns acquired greater global support, some scholars considered that indigenous peoples' rights are at risk of being subordinated to dominant environmentalist and development interests (Dean and Levi 2003; Blaser et al. 2004). Through the establishment of national and international environmentalist alliances, indigenous organizations have come to the conclusion that they need to become involved in some form of sustainable development initiative in order to be heard. In the global context, the equation "endangered forest, endangered people" (Brosius 1997) allowed indigenous peoples and advocates to strengthen arguments that connected indigenous peoples' rights with global sustainable development initiatives. Through this, indigenous people have gained a new space to legitimize their struggle for their rights that seems not to contradict global models of conservation and development interventions. The implication in this context is that indigenous peoples' rights claims are being shaped according to global experts' ideas of the meanings of sustainability and development.

Although environmental advocacy networks between indigenous organizations and international environmental NGOs have played a key role in mobilizing international campaigns against deforestation, these alliances are also mediated by relations of power that tend to impose the agenda of international NGOs upon indigenous peoples' right claims (Chapin 2004; Brysk 2000; Little 1999). Blaser et al. (2004) assert that alliances between social movement and NGOs in public campaigns are highly dependent on the existence of clearly defined and visible points of common interests. By showing the case of the joint campaign to impede mega-development project, a dam construction, in the Chilean Mapuche territory, the case illustrated the complexities in which alliances are embedded. First, is the fact that pressures over indigenous territories and resources are continuous and under the logic of economic development. Second,

the use of norms about human rights and environmental sustainability is often ambiguous. In the case of the Mapuche, although international supporters helped to enhance human rights and protect the environment, shifts in positions of allies and government ended up supporting the needs and interests of the private sector.

The environmentalist appropriation of Amazonia as a mere rainforest area has contributed to obscure the socio-cultural history of the region and its people. Some anthropologists assert that in some cases if indigenous peoples appear in the sustainable development agenda it is just as if they were “part of the natural attributes of Amazonian wilderness” (Little 1999:272).

Although in the present case, a common ground of concerns overlaps between indigenous people and Greenpeace - the rainforest - the meanings and priorities differed for each. For indigenous people the Amazonian rainforest is a historical and socio-cultural landscape experienced and known through everyday interactions. The rainforest is a source of identity and pride, a place of kinship and social networks, and a place for the production and reproduction of the material and symbolic means of life. In short, the rainforest is peoples’ homeland.

For environmentalists what is at stake is the rainforest, and indigenous people constitute one of the suitable actors with which campaigns to protect the forest can be organized. The reasons behind the priority given to the rainforest conservation are numerous: large-scale rainforest destruction in the Amazon is demonstrated to be a global threat for biodiversity loss, climate change, and global warming increased by high levels of carbon emission (Little 2001; Nepstad et al. 2008). In general, there is an alarming process of conversion of forest areas to savannah type vegetation. In this context of global concerns, Amazonia became the key international area for environmentalists’ struggles and interventions through the promotion of sustainable management practices, green products regulations, protected areas, and extractive

reserves. Although pursuing their own interest, social actors such as indigenous peoples became environmentally oriented in their discourses and proposals. Indigenous peoples, on the other hand, constitute a powerful symbol of images and meanings that made environmentalists and laypeople see them not only as “forest people,” but also as icons of resistance to forest destruction (Brosious 1997). This has transformed indigenous peoples’ strategies to be adaptable to the evolving global conditions in which their struggles take place. In other words, indigenous people not only resist forms of “savage” development that take over and destroy their homelands and natural resources, but also participate in and promote sustainable development.

Although in the different rainforest campaigns, Greenpeace refers to forest dwellers, this constitutes an encompassing term that does not distinguish historical and cultural differences and internal heterogeneity among various groups inhabiting the Amazon region. When included in conservation programs, these groups constitute potential means to promote the sustainable development of the region and green certification of forest products. By doing so, the NGO intends to secure the conservation of the rainforest while incorporating local small or large producers into the global market. In other words, the organization includes social groups by privileging their own agenda of sustainable development and not necessarily local peoples’ particular needs and claims.

Two days after the demonstration, I became aware of the conflict generated by a report broadcast on the local TV news, which asserted that the indigenous people who participated in the event were not real Indians, but individuals contracted by Greenpeace to pretend to be Indians. The report also asserted that Greenpeace was an international NGO that wanted to take possession of Amazonia and constituted a threat to national sovereignty. Many sympathizers of the indigenous movement approached the news station to protest against the report and asked the

indigenous leader Dada to take action. When I returned to the office of CITA two days later, I found some of the indigenous leaders waiting for a meeting with the members of the “TV Pontanegra” who produced the report. As in days before, CITA members had decorated their bodies and were wearing their headdresses, feathers, and beads. The Indians’ choice to incorporate the visual representation of wardrobe and body decoration seemed a strategic move to display their identity and assert authenticity during the negotiation of the conflict. Indigenous identity claims mobilized through visual emblems have become particularly relevant in performances of indigenous authenticity. Scholars argue that essentialist images provide indigenous movements powerful visual and exotic symbols to “authenticate” themselves in conflicted contexts (Conklin 1997; Dean and Levy 2003). Conklin (1997) asserts that in indigenous political mobilizations, the exhibition of these symbols became necessary to fulfill Western conceptions of indigenusness that privilege exotic body images as a mark of authenticity. In general, the instrumental use of these symbols has served efforts to define indigenous identity, securing recognition of Indian status, and valorizing indigenous peoples’ cultural diversity and distinctiveness (Dean and Levi 2003). However, while the use of symbolic images can be of political advantage, CITA members have found themselves in a contradictory position, because the exotic body images emphasize essentialist notions of indigenusness while denying their own history of cultural change and mixture.

In the meeting, the leader of CITA, Dada, explained the origins of the indigenous movement as well as various indigenous cultural traditions. He additionally discussed their dependence for subsistence on the forest and rivers, and presented the documentation that gives CITA legal existence. Dada stressed that membership in FDA was CITA’s autonomous decision and requested the production of a new TV report about the indigenous organization (Figure 5-5).

The director of the TV Pontanegra, on the other hand, defended his reporting crew by stating that a law, which protects free information, allows them to produce this type of report. He additionally explained that the reporters “got the sense” that the indigenous group did not want to be interviewed and so chose not to approach any group members. He gave no explanation as to why they negatively portrayed the Indians and why the report included information that defended the expansion of soy farming into the region. In an attempt to reconcile the situation, the representatives from the news agreed to produce the new report; however, no report was done.

Environmental and Development Struggles

Greenpeace versus AgriBusiness: Ideological Battle Divides Santarém

The headline of a local newspaper that circulated days later read “Greenpeace versus AgriBusiness: Ideological Battle divides Santarém” (Agência Amazônia 2006). On May 19, 2006, through one of the typical actions of Greenpeace radical activism, members of this NGO climbed the installations of the Cargill port and delayed its normal functioning for hours (Figures 5-6, 5-7, 5-8). This generated a rapid and aggressive reaction from soy farmers and merchants who organized a protest against the NGO. Members of Greenpeace were jailed and numerous people went out in their cars honking and yelling “*Fora Greenpeace, Amazonia é dos Brasileiros*” (out Greenpeace, Amazonia is Brazilian) and accused the NGO of interfering with the development of the local economy. Two days later, a group of protestors organized by the FDA marched along the main road that goes to the port and displayed messages against deforestation, land conflicts motivated by soy production, local peoples’ displacement, and the establishment of the Cargill port without fulfilling national environmental requirements. In this demonstration, Greenpeace projected a message that read, “*Fora Cargill*” (Cargill out).

Local politicians, representatives of the government, and soy producers sent a manifesto condemning the actions of the NGO and supporting the Cargill multinational company. During

the next several weeks, information in local newspaper addressed the issue, stressing only the conflict with Greenpeace and the benefits brought to the region by soy cultivation. None of these reports explained sufficiently the objectives of grassroots organization claims and instead portrayed them as being manipulated by Greenpeace. Indigenous peoples' claims and protests became invisible in these reports. For environmentalists and soy farmers the focus of discussion was deforestation of the tropical rainforest and the efforts to create a situation in which forest and soy producers could find a common objective, sustainable development. The importance of the forest for the cultural reproduction and survival of indigenous peoples and other forest dwellers did not constitute a relevant issue to take into account in this discussion.

Some CITA members considered that the consequences of the action of Greenpeace in the Cargill port were negative to the interests of the indigenous movement and other grassroots organizations. Although Greenpeace is recognized as a key and powerful ally, some of CITA's members believed that the action of the NGO made the grassroots organizations invisible and blurred the objectives of the demonstration, which were not only to protest against Cargill Company, but also to make the general public aware of the social injustice and impunity experienced in the region. In fact, Pará is considered one of the most lawless states of Brazil, in which impunity of crimes against local peasants and indigenous and irregular appropriation of land prevails (Sauer 2005). Even worse, some soy producers utilized the NGO's actions to accuse the movement of being manipulated and portrayed peasants and indigenous peoples as "culturally retrograde" and opposed to the development of the region. Greenpeace by positioning itself at the global level as the "representative voice" of undifferentiated local dwellers, has not only silenced peoples' own voices, but also blurred the diversity and complex socio-cultural and political realities that accompanied their claims. Tsing (2005), in asking if

advocacy for common justice can emerge across difference, asserts that political mobilization are facilitated by their appeal to diverse groups, who find divergent means and meanings in the cause, and who disagree about what are supposed to be common causes and objects of concern. Taking the case of the community-management forest campaign in the South Kalimantan region, Indonesia, the author analyzes the alliances between villagers and environmentalists, which held different kinds of commitments and understandings of problems and of each other's agenda. Although the idea of difference within common cause may generate satisfaction through the achievement of goals, it also may keep collaborators apart not only in their understandings, but also in the means to achieve results in the supposed common cause.

Additionally, several articles went out emphasizing the green certification agreement signed in April of 2005 between the international environmental NGO The Nature Conservancy (TNC)⁴ and Cargill Company and soy producers of the region. According to the TNC, the agreement was initially signed with 106 small-scale soy farmers who owned properties less than 150 hectares. Although the TNC representative asserted, in a newspaper interview, that all of the certified soy producers have converted forest areas into soy cultivation they did not explain why they were granted the certification (Nilder 2006). According to this agreement, Cargill Company was supposed to buy and export only soybeans with green certification (Radiobrás 2006). By May 16, 2006, another group of soy cultivators signed a new agreement with the TNC for green certification (Santos 2006b); see Figure 5-11. According to the environmental organization, the requirement of the Brazilian Forest Code, which stipulates that farmers in the Amazon should set aside 80 percent of their land as protected forest reserves, had become too difficult to comply

⁴ In 2004, TNC launched the "Responsible Soy Project" a certification program geared toward harnessing market pressure on soy. The idea was to set up a seal of approval for "Amazon-friendly" soy, something similar to certification for organic food that would provide farmers with a market incentive to stop clearing forestlands. Cargill already under pressure from the European market and the focus of the protest of environmental NGOs around the world, agreed to participate in the program (Downie 2007).

with. The green certification constitutes an incentive allowing farmers to increase market prices while conforming to the Brazilian Forest Code to protect the environment. The carbon-trading scheme is one of the incentives, which pays farmers to protect or restore forests (Downie 2007).

Partnership between international environmental NGOs and economic sector and corporate firms became a strategic trend beginning in the 1990s through which a win-win situation has been achieved. While environmental organizations such as TNC gained major influence over national and international official policies, their environmental discourses and practices were accommodated to the terms of the global market, in which the green label promoted both sustainable production and consumption. The economic and corporate sectors on the other hand, by including social and environmental issues in their overall policies, were able to establish a new set of power networks to promote economic development (Zhourri 2004). Tsing (2005) in her analysis of the relationship between the destruction of Kalimantan forest in Indonesia and global trust of capital, points out that among environmental organizations, TNC became known by their corporate partnerships and “deep commitment to capitalism and private property,” through which the NGO has gained substantial economic support⁵. By promoting private property and corporate rights in tropical rainforests, the actions of the NGO have not only perpetuated prevailing systems of inequality, but also have supported the expropriation of land and resources from local forest communities who have no legal titles of their ancestral lands (Brysk 2000; Tsing 2005). The Kalimantan forest was appropriated by the state and defined as free lands for distribution among private investors. As opening the forest for resource exploitation provides incentives for illegal loggers, the strategy that TNC presented was to work

⁵ For example, in April 2004, Cargill awarded a two-year grant-\$ 1million- to support a global TNC-Cargill initiative in conservation and sustainable agriculture projects in three priority designed sites, which includes Brazil's Amazon region (www.cargill.com/news/issues/issues_tncfactsheet.pdf consulted 6 May 2008).

with corporate national and international timber companies to control illegal logging while providing them green certification. Those indigenous peoples already living in the forest were ignored. As in the case of the Santarém disputes, the TNC in Indonesia ignored the context of social injustice and preferred to establish alliances with corporate companies with a large flow of capital.

Thus, although certification can be a good incentive for conservation practices in the Amazon region, questions about the effects on property and resources rights of local residents and indigenous peoples need to be addressed. The issues in the Santarém case are not only about the protection of the forest versus the establishment of soy cultivation, they need to include the cultural and land rights of those populations who make a living from the forest resources. Conservation and green certification programs need to broaden their perspectives regarding the diversity of populations inhabiting the Amazon area and in particular of the indigenous peoples of the lower Tapajos and Arapiuns region. In other words, these programs need to go beyond biological perspective and include other anthropological, archeological, and ethnohistorical studies that can shed light on the historical process of formation of the different socio-cultural and biological systems of the Amazon region. Besides, in the state of Pará, issues of land tenure are specially unregulated which has facilitated irregular appropriation of land through falsification of titles and registry, invasion of areas, and forced displacement of local residents (Sauer 2005).

Economic Development and Amazonian Rainforest

In terms of economic development, the struggle to pursue indigenous peoples' own way of life is becoming subordinated to the Western central idea of development, in which interaction between nation-states and indigenous peoples is dominated by relations of power (Blaser et al. 2004). In this context, the conditions and ways of economic development are imposed as an

inevitable force to which indigenous peoples' culture and rights need to accommodate.

According to Blaser et al (2004), in the new "official" vision of sustainable development, civil society and not the government is considered the most appropriate actor to pursue the sustainability of economic development. The government is no longer the key promoter of development; its main responsibility has become focused on the provision of the legal framework that facilitates market expansion and operation at national and global spheres, in which civil society and NGOs play a key role in giving direction to this market expansion. This has been achieved through the political and administrative decentralization, and processes of democratization and privatization that have spread throughout Latin America. Under the pressures from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, many Latin American countries made agreements to adopt neo-liberal reforms through which movements towards a more participatory civil society have been fostered. In general, this change has constituted the transfer of political power from the state to private hands. The market, on the other hand, acts as a regulator of the economy, that dictates and guarantees a correspondence between what people want and what is produced (Wood 2002). Through this process of global market exchange, it is expected to generate the wealth with which development can be built.

The emphasis on market integration of the sustainable management of Amazonian forest resources is interpreted as a commodification of the region and its people (Zhourri 2004). This suggests that in the discourse of sustainable development, a notion of capitalization of nature prevails, through which natural resources and peoples' cultures are appropriated by and transformed into capital. Access to and regulations of natural resources management based on Westerns conceptions that privilege the economic value of nature generated not only changes in management practices, but also in the social relations and identities of individuals and groups. In

this process of capitalization of nature, ongoing patterns of inequality and distribution of resources are maintained and consequently the sustainability of local social and livelihood systems are endangered.

In particular, the definition of the Amazon as the largest single block of forest in the world or what Andréa Zhouri defined as an area of “forest vocation” constitutes one of the main sources of commodification of the region (Zhouri 2004). Although tropical rainforest constitutes a central topic of articulating the environment in a global scale, the broad differentiation between tropical primary or “pristine” forest and secondary or degraded forest⁶ has served to apply different conservation and economic values that neglect the potential of intervened or degraded forest. According to ITTO (International Tropical Timber Organization), through sustainable management, secondary or degraded forests have the potential to generate significant environmental and livelihood benefits, and “mitigate pressure on primary forest through their ability to produce both wood and non-wood forest products” (ITTO 2002:8). Although secondary forest represents the main source of forest products in many tropical countries, it does not hold the same economic and biological value as primary forest. In the Amazon of Brazil, secondary and degraded forests cover over 50 million hectares and the area is expanding rapidly (ITTO 2002).

Governments and development agents have also appropriated the discourses that differentiate the environmental and economic value of secondary or degraded forest and use it to justify the expansion of economic development into the Amazon region either in the form of

⁶ ITTO defined primary forest as “forest which has never been subject to human disturbance, or has been so little affected by hunting, gathering, and tree-cutting that its natural structure, functions, and dynamics have not undergone any changes that exceeded elastic capacity of the ecosystem.” Secondary forest is “woody vegetation re-growing on land that was largely cleared of its original forest cover; secondary forest commonly develop naturally on land abandoned after shifting cultivation, settle agriculture, pasture, or failed tree plantation.” Degraded forest refers to the “forestlands that have been altered beyond the normal effects natural process through unsustainable use or through natural disasters such as fire, landslides, and floods” (ITTO 2002:10).

large-scale cultivation patterns or infrastructural development. The emphasis on the economic value of nature has established a dichotomy between the biological and market potential of primary and secondary forest. Tragically, this dichotomy affects considerations about the environmental efforts to protect these areas. Because of the relatively low economic potential in terms of availability of goods and environmental services, secondary forest is likely to be replaced by other more profitable resources such as soybean cultivation. The expansion of soy cultivation into areas previously modified or degraded has been used as an argument to support the supposedly low environmental and social impacts of large-scale agro industry. Besides, the high cost of restoration of forest ecosystems eliminates it as a possible option within the current socio-economic and political realities of the tropical region.

Conservation efforts tend to concentrate in areas of primary forest, mainly because of the persistent idea of “undisturbed condition” or “lack of human modification” that is interpreted by environmentalist as the key fact that gives to this forest-type the major source of biodiversity. In an analysis of Western environmental policy and education, Gómez-Pompa and Kaus (1992) assert that conservationists have generally conceived the relationship between human and nature as a dichotomy. In this dichotomy, the forest and wildlife constitute a “wilderness” area enhanced and maintained in the absence of people. The forest is considered as a pristine environment bank of biodiversity and an outdoor laboratory for the scientific community. The wilderness of the forest represents a “window to the past” long before the influence of human activity. The forest as a wilderness area represents also a frontier land to be tamed, managed, and conquered. The Western conception that divides the wild from people influenced global policy and politics and led to unrealistic and contradictory views on natural resource management policies. Folke (2006) insists that conservation biology efforts need to move

beyond perspectives that continue separating nature from people and conceive nature as a static entity. Instead, notions that integrate socio-ecological systems and their complex and dynamic relationships constitute a more appropriate approach in conservation biology.

Forest and Indigenous People

The importance of the forest, either primary or secondary, in the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and other forest dwellers throughout the Amazon region has constituted a critical aspect in the discussion of conservation and economic development of the region. However, as Zhouri (2004) asserts a distance between biodiversity goals and cultural and socio-historical conditions of the Amazonian people, prevails in the efforts made by environmental international NGOs. In this perspective, the author states, “Amazonia is projected into the global context as a mere ecosystem under the influence of global economic and political forces” (Zhouri 2004:74). The social, cultural, and historical significance that the forest has for indigenous peoples does not have a proper weight in the environmental and development discussions. More important, these global discussions seem to continue to ignore archeological and ethnohistorical studies that demonstrate the anthropogenic form and composition of primary forest, in which the role of indigenous populations is of great importance (Balée 2003; Heckenberger et al. 2003; Heckenberger et al. 2007).

Heckenberger, in his research in the Brazilian upper Xingu region, demonstrated not only the dynamic interactions between indigenous peoples and their environment, but also the existence of an ancient densely populated area that highly modified the forest (2003). Thus, rather than a pristine or untouched forest, the Amazon region constitutes a constructed landscape, in which patterns of biodiversity were in large part established by cultural forces (Heckenberger et al. 2007). However, visions of the Amazonia continue to be dominated by what William Denevan defined as the “Pristine Myth” which promoted the idea that by the time of European

invasion, the Americas and particularly the Amazonia was scarcely populated, and consequently its “pristine or virgin forest” was barely modified (Denevan 1992). This also led to the idea of the benign Indian living in the depth of the pristine forest as “natural man.” The concept of natural man applied to Amerindians came from European sixteenth century thought on the savage or uncivilized man. The natural man was understood as a “someone whose mind is unfettered by the moral and intellectual constraints of civil society and acts according to natural reasons” (Pagden 1982:9). In this sense, it was believed that Indians did not disturb or modify their environment; instead, they lived a solitary life in the forest and subsisted merely by hunting and gathering (Rowe 1964). Moreover, these ideas reinforce the images of indigenous peoples as sparse and isolated social groups that have maintained an unchanging culture through centuries.

These persisting ideas bring consequences to the current claims of indigenous identity and land rights by the culturally mixed groups of Santarém region. On one hand, conflicting development and conservation agendas create competition for land resources among conservationist, development agents, rural and indigenous peoples. Definition of forest reserves, extractive reserves, areas for agricultural expansion, and indigenous peoples’ lands have been difficult to harmonize in the planning of the future environmental and economic development of the region. On the other hand, the dichotomous conception of undisturbed versus disturbed forest has established a parallel dichotomy between “authentic” Indian and culturally mixed indigenous people. As the idea of the low ecological and economic value of the secondary and disturbed forest provides environmental and moral rights to open new space for development, the claims of indigenous people of mixed descent are at risk of being questioned for their presumed lack of authenticity, and consequently their rights to forestlands are denied. They do not fit the

traditional Western romantic images of an uncontacted Indian living in a primary and intact forest. This prevailing romantic idealism, naturalism and obsessive interest in marks of traditional authenticity conflict with socio-cultural structures constructed through long and complex processes of change.

Stereotypes about Indians and their way of life inundated street conversations in Santarém during May-July 2006, bringing contradictory arguments to defend the disappearance of both the Indians and the secondary forest. In this argument, indigenous people continued to be portrayed as primitive, undeveloped, and lacking the capacity to bring progress; in sum, as people who needed the hand of more “advanced people” to move the region out of stagnation. For many of the newcomers in the Santarém region that came to look for land to grow soybeans, neither the secondary forest nor the people living in or around it had enough value to be “preserved.” Thus, as the forest can be swept away to establish a more profitable activity, the land of indigenous people can be taken over to make it productive.

Laypeople believed that the “common Indian way of life” that characterizes the region was a big obstacle to prosperity. This means that in general, laypeople saw the region as populated mainly by indigenous peoples. However, when this discourse crossed with the claim for recognition and land rights of Indians, the arguments turned against the authenticity of these indigenous peoples. In practice, reactions against their presumed inauthenticity meant two related things: one that indigenous people continued to be understood as a category of discrimination, a condition that justified seizure of their lands and denial of their rights. The other refers to the homogenizing views of indigenous peoples that negated their cultural diversity and socio-historical change. Some anthropologists assert that although the term “indigenous” occludes the internal heterogeneity of the people it refers to, the term is also a convenient

conceptual construct to represent complex and contradictory social and political processes of the people that self-identity as such (Dean and Levi 2003).

Indigenous people of mixed descent have become a difficult social-cultural group to understand and to deal with. For many of the opponents to this indigenous movement, the cultural traditions of indigenous peoples of mixed descent are presumed to be little differentiated from the Western society. In other words, these indigenous people are conceived as assimilated into the national society. Environmental NGOs and governmental institutions, on the other hand, have maintained a cautious position in debates regarding the claims of the culturally mixed indigenous peoples of Santarém. The support that the indigenous movement was expecting from these organizations has been delayed until legal recognition by FUNAI. This implies a difficult situation for CITA because while their rights claim to ancestral lands are in hold until fulfillment of the state's legal and administrative actions for recognition, decisive support from other organizations is also pending on this decision. Unlike the effects of indigenous peoples' international activism during the 70s and 80s that brought substantial benefits regarding land tenure rights (Blaser et al. 2004; Brysk 2000), in this case indigenous people continue to be subordinated within national and international interests that intend to suppress and obscure indigenous peoples' struggles for rights.

Redefining Strategies

Despite the disparities of discursive and competing claims, the indigenous movement managed to place their problems and seek solutions by strengthening relationships with local and national governmental and non-governmental organizations that got together through an international campaign. Indigenous peoples that are commonly portrayed as powerless in the face of the force of the socio-economic expansion of Western culture have re-accommodated their strategies to deal with purely conservationist and development goals. The indigenous

movement has strategically used their invisibility in the campaign to move quietly but decisively through the governmental apparatus to struggle for recognition. While the indigenous organization is often ignored and misunderstood, CITA leaders have managed to gain space and recognition of certain rights using national and international legal frameworks for indigenous peoples' rights.

CITA's ability to include a major social movement into its own claims was considered by its members as a positive outcome. Land rights and demarcation become coherent with national and global discourses of Amazonian natural resources conservation and social justice. They were able to portray themselves as primary dependants on these resources for their cultural and physical reproduction and consequently to validate their claim for ancestral land rights. In other words, CITA was not only able to establish alliances with a broad range of NGOs and institutions, but also made an instrumental use of its peoples' ethnicities for political mobilization. *Frente em defesa da Amazonia* is a large social movement that includes several groups of civil society, education and research institutions, and non-governmental organizations through which indigenous peoples have engaged themselves with and against corporate and governmental interests. This social movement has also contributed to establish networks of exchange and solidarity with other groups and institutions at the regional and global levels. The FDA campaign also served to strengthen the indigenous movement by entering into contact with other social groups that become interested in their cause. In Blaser et al. (2004) it is asserted that a new form of indigenous activism is being practiced that is consciously seeking partnership with environmental and social activists to resist and protest violation of indigenous human rights.

In general, the counter-arguments expressed during the campaign allowed them to see clearly the position of local government and institutions regarding the situation of indigenous

people. In other words, they saw the local government more as an ally of the interests of large-scale farmers and the multinational organization Cargill. Although not a surprising fact, for the indigenous movement this represented a redefinition of strategies to deal with the government in negotiations about indigenous rights. In fact, through membership in the FDA and participation in the campaign, CITA strategically strengthened relationships with the educational sector of the government to gain space and express their educational needs. It became common for the members of CITA to be invited to different urban elementary and high schools to give talks about the indigenous cultures and organizations. Students on the other hand, frequently visited the office of CITA to complete school assignments about the indigenous movement of the region. They were able to mainstream indigenous issues in the urban schools and created a better setting for negotiations about the establishment of indigenous schools in the region. Based on the dispositions of the international legislation specifically the ILO Convention 169 concerning educational rights of indigenous peoples, the 1988 national Constitution, and national laws and resolutions about indigenous education⁷, CITA organized a plan to change the status of the schools of the communities affiliated to CITA to that of indigenous schools.

Taking advantage of the creation of the *Secretaria de Educação Continuada, Alfabetização e Diversidade* of the national educational plan, through which the basis for offering a differentiated indigenous education is established, one of the CITA members⁸ began to work with the institution to develop the policy in indigenous education. Through this strategy, 30 schools of the region were re-defined as indigenous schools and 94 members of CITA were

⁷ These are the law of National Education articles 26, 32, 78, and 79; Law 10.172 of January 9, 2001 or National Plan of Education; and Resolution 03/99.

⁸ One member of CITA who had a Masters' degree in anthropology from the FLACSO (The faculty of Latin American Social Science based in Ecuador) took this position. This person obtained support from the COIAB to carry out studies in this educational institution.

selected to receive education and certification as indigenous teachers. According to CITA leaders, by establishing the educational base, they were gaining steps in the process of recognition. In other words, they considered that this strategy would facilitate FUNAI's legal definition of their indigenous status, since it would be contradictory to negate rights to a population, which is already receiving educational benefits as indigenous peoples. The efforts to be heard at the governmental level have already generated responses. By the beginning of April of 2008, FUNAI announced the call for professionals to form the technical groups and carry out anthropological and environmental studies in six different areas of the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns region, including the indigenous territory Cobra Grande.

Conclusions

Focusing on the particularities of an international campaign for the protection of the Amazon rainforest and against the expansion of soybean farming into forest areas, this chapter has presented an analysis of the global environmental and development discourses in which indigenous peoples' claim for recognition is embedded. The situations presented in the analysis illustrated the complexity of the multiple and competing voices and actors that integrate environmental campaigns to save the Amazon rainforest.

Prevailing global emphasis on Amazon biodiversity and forest diminished the importance of the cultural and political contexts of the region and ongoing inequality in land rights and social services. At the same time, this emphasis contributes to the homogenization of the population inhabiting the region as if all of them had the same concerns and interests in the rainforest. Additionally, prevailing notions of indigenous peoples as tied to an unchanging past made it more difficult to gain the decisive support that culturally mixed indigenous peoples expected from powerful international environmental organizations. In this campaign, the claims

for recognition of culturally mixed indigenous people were placed in the “backyard” of environmental struggles.

As terms of alliances become more complex, the indigenous movement improved strategies to gain new spaces of negotiations for recognition. The mere fact of being part of a broader regional movement, FDA, and being identified as one of the many forest dwellers of the region, gave the indigenous organization new opportunities to channel their concerns and needs and to learn how better to negotiate with the regional government. The international environmental organization on the other hand, has benefited by the presence of the indigenous organization in the campaign, since they constitute a powerful symbol to promote the protection of ancient forest. As has been revealed by satellite-base map research, the biggest portion of forestlands in the Amazon is located in indigenous territories (Nepstad et al. 2005).



Figure 5-1. Preparing the manifesto

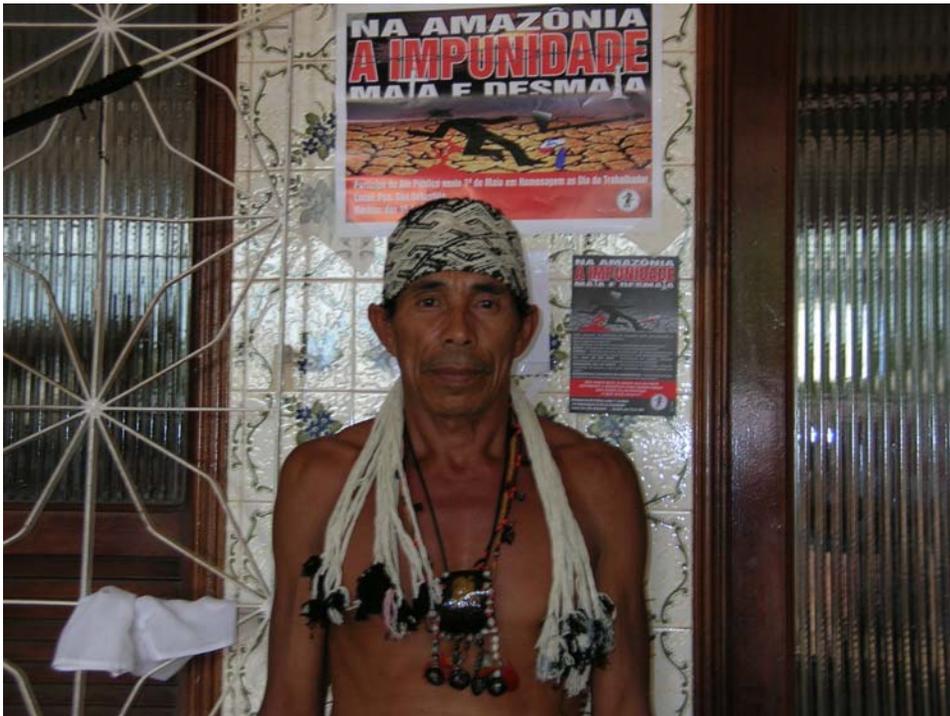


Figure 5-2. Member of CITA posing next to the advertisement of the event



Figure 5-3. Preparing their dresses for the demonstration



Figure 5-4. The report of the demonstration in a local newspaper



Figure 5-5. Indigenous leaders negotiating the conflict with the TV news



Figure 5-6. Newspaper headline on the protest



Figure 5-7. View of the Cargill port in the river Tapajós



Figure 5-8. Newspaper report on the agreement between Cargill and The TNC

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS

New Times: The Future of the Indigenous Movement

On April 9, 2008, when FUNAI (National Indian Foundation of Brazil) announced the opening of consultancies¹ to develop anthropological and technical studies in three different indigenous areas of the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns region, the indigenous movement asserted that “after 11 years of collective political struggle, we are starting to be appropriately treated.” However, this statement came with a call to the indigenous leaders to concentrate effort to secure the finalization of studies and the demarcations of their lands. Previous experience with the Mundurucu communities of the Flona Tapajós forest reserve taught CITA (Indigenous Council Tapajós-Arapiuns) that the administrative process of recognition not only takes longer than expected, but also encounters technical and legal obstacles² that can delay recognition and ratification of rights to their lands.

The debates that emerge from the struggle for recognition of this indigenous movement contain both theoretical and political topics beyond the complexities of the Brazilian administrative process. The practical and political implications of the case stem from the fact that indigenous identity claims are based on claims for territory, which makes identification as indigenous people a particular kind of identity; one that is territorialized in a specific geographical area. This means, a territory appropriate through historical processes of interactions and past memories that help them to configure their sense of self-identity. What can

¹ PPTAL (Projeto Integrado de proteção às Populações e Terras Indígenas da Amazônia Legal in Portuguese) project PUND/BRA 96/018 announcements 2008/003, 2008/004, and 2008/005 to contract anthropologists, geographers, foresters, and other professionals to develop studies on the Borari, Arapium, Jaraqui, Tapajós, Cara Preta, and Tupaiu Indians.

² Nobre (2002) asserts that the entire process of land demarcation and recognition can take approximately 3 years. However, in the case of the Mundurucu of the Flona Tapajós, the process has not gone further than the second phase, which corresponds to the analysis of the anthropological and technical studies that in the region were developed in 2003. Disagreements about the accuracy of the anthropological study are at stake in this case.

anthropologists and policymakers learn from this case? With this question in mind, I examine the theoretical implications and contributions of the Arapium and Jaraqui case to the understanding of indigenous identity construction and its relevance to the politics of recognition.

Summary and Prospective

The claims for recognition of ethnic indigenous identity have become an important issue to reexamine from an anthropological perspective. It is an increasingly contested feature of national and international policies addressing indigenous peoples' rights. These issues have become more challenging as claims for recognition are asserted from a wide range of socio-political settings and peoples who have experienced complex historical processes of cultural change and mixture. Adding to the complexity is the fact that the integrative and homogenizing force of globalization, as modernization before it, which was expected to eliminate ethnic bonds and identities, seems instead to have revived and strengthened old ethnic identities and generated new ones (Cornell and Hartmann 1998). Moreover, Cornell and Hartmann assert that multiethnicity, or the mixing of ethnic and racial identities and ancestries in a single person, is an ancient phenomenon that is a product of historical human movement and interactions. Other forces such as colonialism, slavery, political turmoil, security, forced displacement, and economic need have contributed to the mixing of peoples' ethnic and racial identities. To researchers, multiethnicity constitutes a globally salient form of re-constructed and new ethnicities (Cornell and Hartmann 1998). In terms of indigenous identity claims, recognition of the right to self-definition must involve not only the analysis of the legal administrative procedures that acknowledge an indigenous identity, but also the historical condition that suppressed and transformed the cultural base of this identity. This is of critical importance for those culturally mixed indigenous peoples whose culture and traditional socio-political organizations were forcibly changed and their identities hidden in order to survive. However, it

is needed the integration of perspectives that go beyond the traditional view that interpreted change as a form of disintegration of indigenous peoples' cultures and identities. This is important in the context of Latin America and in particular in Brazil, where anthropologists play a key role in the legal and administrative process of recognition of indigenous peoples' land rights. The provision of expert reports of anthropologists is requested by FUNAI to make final decisions about rights and demarcation of indigenous lands (Santos and Oliveira 2003; Ramos 2003). In the conformation of the Technical Group (GT) responsible for the studies to identify the borders of the indigenous lands, the anthropologist is defined as the coordinator of the group (Nobre 2002). For example, in the current project of land delimitation in the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns, five anthropologists were contracted as consultants to coordinate the studies in the region.

Alcida Ramos (2003) asserts that there are different and complex issues that need to be considered by anthropologists when analyzing claims on indigenous ancestry by groups that are not legally recognized as Indians. These issues are: 1) Miscegenation does not erase ethnicity, as ethnic sentiments can resurface after centuries of dormancy; 2) defining Indianess is no longer an obvious clear-cut administrative operation; 3) cases of ethnic resurgence are more frequent in regions where pressure to wipe out Indians has been stronger; 4) the motivation for ethnic resurgence does not seem to be land rights alone (Ramos 2003:415). These and other issues are at stake in the role of the anthropologist in ethnic recognition and in the anthropological inquiry of these claims.

The analysis I presented in this study aims to contribute to and broaden this framework of inquiry. I examined the way the indigenous peoples from the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns region revalued the meaning of being Indian, validated, and legitimized their perspectives as indigenous

peoples and as a regional indigenous movement. I presented detailed analysis of the way the Arapium and Jaraqui peoples constructed the meaning of their ethnicity, and the social-political context in which they re-emerged and struggled for legal recognition. Taken as a whole, this study provides insightful analysis of the problematic of the question of indigenous identity and the complex and varies ways the term “indigenous peoples” is defined. More important is the way this study calls attention in the need to consider the diversity of situations through which peoples-land relationships contribute to self-definition as indigenous people. In this sense, the study moved forward traditional definitions of indigenous peoples by focusing in socio-cultural experience and historical value of the Indian category. The integration of the constructionist, place, and historical perspectives allowed me to have a different approach to the understanding of the claims for recognition and the significance of being Indian. That is, going beyond the search of the likely benefits and rights that this type of self-definition entails. The integration of these perspectives allowed me to focus on the process of construction of meaning in context and the establishment of changing relationships between people and their socio-cultural settings. At the same time, an in-depth view of experience and perception of peoples-land relationships allowed me to understand how the Arapium and Jaraqui peoples have appropriated and re-interpreted their landscape, especially in relation to the recovery of their history and identity as indigenous peoples. In sum, the study showed how the historical political struggle to defend their socio-cultural landscape facilitated the articulation of land and identity to seek recognition. However, the continue re-interpretation and re-construction of their landscape and identity placed the Indian question in terms of the intertwining of change with continuity. In this sense, the conception change becomes crucial in the understanding of indigenous peoples’ definition.

Through the next section, I review the main arguments discussed in the dissertation based on additional set of reflections and questions associated with indigenous identity construction.

Main Arguments

I began this dissertation by identifying the critical issues and features that emerge when analyzing the meanings, construction, and claims of ethnic indigenous identity. This led me to assert that a single theoretical perspective would not be enough to explain the complexities that this phenomenon contains. Then, I proposed the integration of constructionist, historical, and place perspectives to be able to elucidate the dynamic process of identity construction. I guided the study with two main questions: How do culturally mixed indigenous groups construct the meaning of their indigenous identity? And, what are the material, symbolic, and historical means that help them to shape their ethnic identity? Below, I recapitulate my attempts to draw the lines of my interpretation of the lived experience of the indigenous peoples of the lower Tapajós-Arapuins region. More than a simply summary, I want to present an analysis of the main points and their implications as they relate to the anthropological inquiry about indigenous peoples and ethnic identity studies.

I analyzed the historical context in which the concept of indigenous peoples formed, and the different colonial conceptions that promoted the assimilation and disappearance of indigenous cultures in the Amazon region. The purpose of Chapter 2 was to illustrate how some indigenous peoples, such as the Arapiun, presumed to be assimilated or extinct, started recovering forgotten or hidden ethnicities and cultural values tied to their identity as indigenous peoples. This leaves us with questions that go beyond the influence of current national and international human rights legislation in facilitating the claims of indigenous identity, which has become one of the main sources for explaining this claim. It requires us, as anthropologists, to review previous conceptions, definitions, and interpretations of processes of interactions between

indigenous peoples and nation-state powers and wider society. This is because the cultural history of many indigenous peoples has depended on particular versions of their history produced and explained as the “correct” view by Western colonists and intellectuals during 17th and 19th centuries. More important is to review how we have built the conception of *change* when it relates to culturally mixed indigenous people. How do we deal with change when it generates disruption and creates historical gaps between the present and past forms of cultural expressions and indigenous identity? I assert that this is different from the idea of a “traceable change,” which is the search for marks or signs of evidence that link contemporary indigenous peoples with a former existence in the landscape of cultural expressions that clearly distinguishes an indigenous group from wider society. This also differs from what seems to be the basis for arguments against the claims of peoples of mixed descent: the search for an identifiable direct lineage from a distant ancestor, through which a progressive or abrupt process of change of a “core” culture can be traced. It is clear that we cannot continue to answer the question of change as if it were just a “proof” of the disintegration of indigenous cultures as predicated by assimilationist theory.

I want to review the arguments presented in this chapter about the process of change based on the work of Pacheco de Oliveira (1999) who uses the notion of “ethnology of loss” (*etnologia das perdas*) to study the problem of emergent ethnicities and cultural re-construction in the case of the Northeastern Indians of Brazil. He uses this concept to explain the re-invention of known indigenous ethnicities and emergence of new ones through dynamic processes of cultural re-signification. This refers to the permanent re-elaboration, reproduction or transformation of culture, a condition that made indigenous peoples’ cultures diverse, complex, heterogeneous, and different from pre-Colombian Indians. To better explain this transformation, Oliveira uses the

concept of territorialization understood as the “movement through which an object of politico-administrative control, such as the indigenous communities during the colonial period, becomes an organized collectivity, forming its own identity, establishing mechanisms of decision-making and representation, and re-structuring its cultural expressions” (Oliveira 1999:21-22). This concept is important because the social transformations of indigenous people precipitated by the territorial expansion of colonial frontiers have been interpreted as a mere force of homogenization or disarticulation of indigenous cultures. As Pacheco de Oliveira proposes it, the concept of territorialization allows us to understand change as the process of re-accommodation and re-articulation of indigenous cultures that emerge from the mixing of diverse ethnic groups and/or geographical dislocation and dispersion. In the case of the Indians of Northeastern Brazil, Oliveira asserts that territorialization cannot be understood simply as a homogenizing force because through the resignification of their cultures these indigenous people were able to re-construct their ethnic identities. Some Brazilian scholars assert that contemporary indigenous populations are the product of different processes of territorialization associated either with colonial religious missions, subsequent colonial, imperial, and state indigenist policies and institutions such as the SPI (Indian Protection Service) and FUNAI, or indigenous peoples’ own strategies of adaptation to new ways of life (Santos and Oliveira 2003; Salomon et al. 2005).

Therefore, the current debate on indigenous land rights is not only about the legal definition of the extension of land necessary for the reproduction of indigenous cultures, but also about the definition of indigenous territories as a product of processes of identity construction. Salomon et al. (2005) assert that indigenous territories and the elements that define an ethnic group are constructed by the members of the group itself as part of a political act in defense of

their lands and resistance to invasion and dislocation. Various historical threats experienced by indigenous people have propitiated the creation and re-creation of their territories. The indigenous Arapium, for example, have experienced different forms of territorialization since colonial times, such as the establishment of Jesuit missions that expanded throughout the lower Tapajós and Arapiuns region during the 17th and 18th centuries, the Directory of Pombal regime, the *Cabanagem* revolt, and the current re-territorialization through the CITA indigenous movement. Victor Toledo (2005) asserts that in Latin America indigenous people have responded in different ways to the many changes imposed on the spatial dimensions of their cultural organizations. One of these responses is what he defined as re-territorialization or the re-construction of ancient ethno-territories, which constitutes a key political strategy in the affirmation of their right to self-determination. Re-territorialization involves the recovery of the historical memories and cultural knowledge inscribed in their territories.

As I described in Chapter 2, in the lower Tapajós region alone, five Jesuit missions were established and indigenous populations of different ethnic and linguistic origins, including the Arapium, were ruled under the control mechanism of the missions. This constituted a new form of spatial organization and mixture not only in genealogical terms, but also in the articulation and accommodation of different cultures, including that of the colonial power. The effects of the Directory of Pombal (1757-1798) in the dismantling of the Jesuit missions and its socio-economic integrationist policy immersed indigenous populations in a new form of civil administration (Almeida 1997). The promotion of freedom, civil and political functions of indigenous populations as administrators of new villages (before missionary *aldeamentos*), and their mixture with Whites, produced new local geographical spaces. In this form of territorialization, indigenous peoples were conceived as part of a larger socio-cultural system, in

which they supposedly ceased to believe in their own myths, lost their cultures and ethnicities, and became known by the generic Indian term *tapuio*. The effects of the imperial military response to the Amazonian social political rebellion known as *Cabanagem* (1835-1841) generated other forms of territorialization by geographical dispersion and re-accommodation of the remaining indigenous populations into the Tapajós and Arapiuns region. Dislocated from the delimited administrative spaces of colonial and imperial control, the indigenous populations in the region were presumed extinct and/or assimilated into the wider society in the form of a new socio-economic group, the *caboclo*. Two centuries after the Arapium Indians were last mentioned in the official written record, they and other indigenous groups of the region started a new form of cultural and political reappropriation and re-significance of their ancient territories and ethnicities. However, unlike previous forms of territorialization that were enforced by colonial or state indigenist policies, this new effort evolved from inside of the indigenous movement to defend their ancestral lands and rights. By using the legal national and international frameworks that defend the right to self-definition, these peoples contested state definition of their identities as “traditional communities” and their lands as extractive or forest reserves (Ioris 2005). Instead, they promoted the consolidation of ancestral indigenous lands and asserted their indigenous identity. Moreover, the current form of re-territorialization is not a homogenizing one, because in the process of re-significance of their land and culture, each indigenous group reevaluated and reaffirmed forgotten ethnicities.

In Chapter 3, I analyzed the conditions under which the people of the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns region came to see themselves again as indigenous people and renewed their sense of indigenusness. The chapter explains how the claim to the right of self-identification is intertwined with the claim to territorial rights as an inseparable condition for peoples’ indigenous

identity. By presenting the context of land conflict in the region due to the governmental decision regarding the creation of the Flona Tapajós forest reserve and the Tapajós-Arapiuns extractive reserve, I analyzed how people revaluated the *índio* category and re-constructed old ethnic identities. I asserted that the sense of indigenosity was not a new or an unknown form of self-definition. Instead, it was a hidden identity largely unexpressed and secret because of the stigma of being Indian. Their claims for recognition of indigenous identity and land rights are based on different aspects that include the historical lived experience of discrimination and exclusion tied to their ascription to the *índio* category, their relationship with their land, and the search for state “benefits” to secure their land and related indigenous rights. In this sense, the arguments that support the claims for recognition are based in both political and moral discourses.

Cardoso de Oliveira (2006) asserts that the struggle for recognition implies a personal and collective revaluation of peoples’ self-respect, through which the sense of dignity of a previously derogatory identity can be recuperated. Regaining the respect that an identity holds is fundamental to engage in political struggle for recognition. In general, prejudice against Indians prevented not only self-definition, but also recognition. I suggested that efforts to gain recognition evolved also from changes in peoples’ stigmatized condition as Indians. These changes in the position of the Indian, from a derogatory to a respectable identity, contain ethical and political efforts supported by the internal revaluation of the self and the legal frameworks that facilitate claims for legal recognition. In the case of the people of the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns region, internal dialogues about their Indian ancestries motivated the revaluation of the *índio* category and invigorated it with a different and positive meaning. The slogan of the indigenous movement, “I am an Indian and I am not ashamed of it” is a clear indication of the

renewed value and self-respect gained in this process. This constituted the basis of reconstruction of forgotten ethnicities, and the force to engage in political activism to claim their rights as indigenous people. And in this process, land became a powerful symbol of indigenusness that served the claim for land demarcation. I explained the political and moral arguments of land claim with the concept of “contested and inscribed places.” These concepts refer to the social conflicts in a particular place that generate resistance against differentiated control of resources and the meaningful relationships between people and land through which they form their concept of the self (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2005). Thus, the people of the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns have come to recognize themselves as the embodiment of ancient indigenous ethnicities that are historically tied to this region. Land as a political and moral entity constituted a value component that contributed to the formation of the meaning of group identities. A close and meaningful relationship with their land helps them to evoke a moral and political commitment to practical actions to defend and claim the rights over their lands.

As my interest was particularly oriented toward understanding how these various indigenous people formed the meaning of their ethnic identities, a close analysis of the material and symbolic means that helped the Arapium and Jaraqui to construct their identities was developed in chapter 4. The Arapium and Jaraqui recognized each other as members of different ethnic groups, although the meaning of their identities evolved from the same historical conditions that caused them to experience radical process of change and cultural mixture. Their contemporary history tied them to a common past from which the significance of certain socio-cultural aspects of their identity and internal political interests brought them to define themselves as separate ethnic groups.

The conceptual sources through which people explained the meanings of their ethnic identities raise issues of social history, self-determination, power, and politics. The identities of the Arapium and Jaraqui have been constituted and shaped through practice, experience, and interactions with the local and wider cultures and societies. That is, their ethnic identities cannot be seen as formed solely within the context of indigenous communities. They have struggled to reconstruct their own histories and identities fitting with both their particular experiences and externally driven forces, which they interpret according to their own schemes. In their efforts to gain recognition, they highlight as essential certain elements of their history and culture that are considered crucial by the wider society and institutions for recognition as indigenous people. The Arapium and Jaraqui people asserted their indigenous identities evoking the meaningful relationship established between them and their land of origin, the historical memory integral to their social and cultural experience as *índios*, the socio-political situations that generated transformation in their cultures, the consciousness acquired by knowing their own history, the experience of social exclusion, and the political importance of their ethnic pride. The dynamic and changing relationship among these aspects is what gives the meaning and the force that the Arapiuma and Jaraqui Indians utilize to support their claims. For them, their involvement with the indigenous movement constitutes a political expression embedded with memories, history, and territorial meanings that mobilize people through collective action.

The construction of their ethnic identities is an active and interactive process through which the individuals build new ways of interpreting themselves. Indigenous identity is not just the product of the present socio-political struggle; it is founded on the historical, personal, and collective memories that have enabled the Arapium and Jaraqui people to self-ascribe to the Indian category. In this process, the importance of land to the re-construction of their ethnic

identity is crucial since it is through it that Arapium and Jaraqui perceived their memories of the past and represent their historical knowledge. In other words, their land is understood and used as a symbol of their Indian past; it constitutes a type of evidence of ancestral activity that is confirmed by the reproduction of cultural traditions, such as the farming of cassava, production and consumption of *farinha*, and fishing. The land and the Arapiuns River represent in this sense, a complement of each other in the constitution of the meaning of being Arapium and Jaraqui Indians.

Although for the people of the lower Tapajós and Arapiuns, the conception of the land-indigenous people relationship is a powerful political and moral argument to claim their lands rights, I want to review the future implications of the process of land demarcation for the indigenous movement itself. In Latin American indigenous movements, the recognition of territorial rights is conceived as a crucial condition to achieve the self-determination of indigenous peoples' lives and institutions (Toledo 2005). Within a globalized context that everyday brings new threats to indigenous territories, such as intervention of transnational companies via large-scale projects of development, mining and oil exploration, and expansion of agroindustry, the spatial definition of indigenous territories has become an urgent and critical endeavor for the protection of indigenous rights. Toledo indicates that the risk to indigenous territories is not only reflected in the spatial expansion of the globalizing economy, but also in the transformation of the social and political spaces of indigenous peoples' territories. That is, an imminent risk of destruction of the collective dimension of indigenous territories expressed through the dynamic of "(de/re)territorialization of economies, societies, and power" (2005:83). The author asserts that to defend against this dynamic of global economy, indigenous peoples require the stabilization of the legal condition of their territories and the strengthening of the

social base of their territories. This has been experienced through indigenous peoples' own processes of re-territorialization, in which the politics of ethnicity has played a key role. Indigenous territories are being re-constructed through recuperation of historical memories and indigenous knowledge of their environment and the social and political forms of organization of the space. In this sense, the conception of indigenous territories acquired dimensions that go beyond the legal and administrative states' action of physical delimitation of land. The concept of territory includes cultural identity, land, natural resources, biodiversity, social organization of the space, political control, etc. These aspects translated into five different uses of the notion of territory: A) territory as jurisdiction, which refers to a geographical area under the political control of an indigenous collectivity; B) territory as geographical space which indicates the lands to be demarcated; C) territory as habitat according to the Convention 169, which refers to the total environment on which indigenous peoples depend to sustain and evolve their cultures; D) Territory as biodiversity area including the indigenous knowledge of their lands; and E) territory as symbolic and historical spaces socially constructed and related to the indigenous peoples' collective identities. The uses of these notions change according to cultural and political contexts, and have created not only conceptual confusion, but also disaggregation of important elements constitutive of the right to self-determination (Toledo 2005).

Under these indigenous peoples' conceptions of what their territories embrace, I want to call attention to the risk of the recurrent use of the notion of territory primarily as geographical area to be demarcated. Besides the fact that many of the processes of land demarcation in Latin America became a form of land titling in defense of the legal land tenure of non-indigenous

properties³ that imposed reduction on the extension of ancestral indigenous territories, a risk of losing the very notion of territory is in place. On one hand, the process of fragmentation of ancestral territories through the definition of spatial limits between Indian and non-Indian lands is reconfiguring the spatial conception of territory by reducing it to a concept of land, that is a western notion of a piece of area over which is granted property rights. On the other hand, the socio-cultural practices through which a territory is defined and organized are being reduced to the space of the productive activities necessary for the physical reproduction of indigenous peoples.

I want to illustrate this issue with a situation experienced with the indigenous movement CITA and in particular with the Arapium people. In June-July 2007, as part of the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the indigenous movement, Florêncio and I organized an exchange of experiences in indigenous land struggle. An indigenous leader, Ernesto Coimbra, of the indigenous Pastos from Colombia was invited. The main theme discussed by the Colombian leader was the relationship among original rights, territory, and identity⁴. He explained this relationship through their myth of origin and their conception of time and history, which he explained is represented in spiral form. When Arapium people asked him about the extension of their territory and the demarcation process, he explained that their territory does not have demarcated limits, and it goes from the south frontier of Colombia to the north of Ecuador. Their territory embraces areas of the highlands or páramos, the pacific coast, and the high part of the Amazon region. The Arapium were astonished to learn about the dimension of the Pastos territory and asked for more explanation about how they were able to recuperate such a large

³ See for example the case of the Bolivian Communal Lands of Origin (TCOs in Spanish) and the long and conflicting process of “Saneamiento” or the legal “clearance” of non-indigenous peoples’ property rights within indigenous territories (Martínez 2000).

⁴ See Rappaport for more information about indigenous Pastos and their process of territorial struggle (1994).

amount of land. Ernesto went on to talk about three moments of their history that he depicted in a schema, the present, the past, and the previous past (Figures 6-1 and 6-2) as the key reading process of their own history to recuperate their territory and the ancestral authority over it. However, the Arapium were not still clear why Pastos' territory was not demarcated. Then, Ernesto explained that the area where he is from, the Gran Cumbal, embraces four communities that constitute *resguardos*⁵ or indigenous lands as in the Brazilian case, but this is just one dimension of their ancestral territory. Their territory is constituted not only by the *resguardos*, but also by all other areas that are still occupied by people that do not self-identify as Indians, including the capital city of the state of Nariño. Conceiving of the territory in this way they have been able to recuperate more areas as *resguardos* and strengthened the relationship with other Pastos communities dispersed in different parts of their territory. The strengthening of their social base is what has made them able to reconstruct their territory.

For the Arapium, this was an important lesson that made them think about their own situation. As presented in chapter 4, the Arapium conceive of the Arapium River region as the land of their people; in other words, their territory. However, in the claims for land rights, there has not been a dialogue among the 15 communities that self-identify as Arapium about the conception of their territory and the relationships among them as Arapium. The definition of their lands is based on the actual size of the *aldeias* they belong to. They came to realize that they were fragmenting their ancestral territory even more and isolating the communities as they would be separated by the Indian and non-Indian divide. They were becoming fixed and rooted within pieces of land. While the notion of rootedness has helped the Arapium of the *aldeia* of Caruci to legitimize their identity and historical attachment to the land claimed, it also raises

⁵ The *resguardos* of Gran Cumbal constitute an association of communal property, with political autonomy, and colonial rights titles provided to the caciques during the 18th century.

some questions regarding their future in terms of mobility, border crossing and cultural transformation. Particularly in the presumption of land as an “autonomous” space (Gupta and Ferguson 1992) for the reproduction of their identity and culture, they are taking the risk of losing the sense of interconnectedness through which identity and place are reconstructed. By defining their territory merely as the land to be demarcated, they are narrowing their identity and their cultural distinctiveness to that specific space, as if their identity would not exist out of this delineated space.

In the analysis of conception of identity and place among Hutu refugees in Africa, Malkki (1992), shows the complex ways through which displaced people construct, remember, and claim particular places as homelands or nations. By questioning the tendency to naturalize the links between people and place through the uses of root metaphors, she argues these metaphors have served to root people, and particularly Indians, in soils as living a stable territorialized existence. In other words, this has served to incarcerate or confine them to particular places. Her main call is in the danger that this type of conception may bring to the idea of displacement or (de)territorialized identities as a pathological condition of uprooted people, as if people without a specific land have no collective memories that attach them to places. While she concentrates on the moral implication of this metaphor for the construction of the identity of displaced people, I want to stress the political implications of the confinement of indigenous peoples to delineated spaces.

First, we need to take into account that the lower region of the Tapajós-Arapuins Rivers constitutes a global geography center of spatial distribution not only of indigenous lands, but also of ecological and economic spaces in the form of forest reserves, extractive reserves, and cultivable lands. The project of demarcation of the Arapium lands through separated and

enclosed spaces established discontinuities in the socio-cultural vision of their ancestral territory, and identity boundaries between what would be defined as Arapium and non-Arapium lands. In the politics of recognition, this fragmentation would serve the interest of those that question the identity and land tenure rights of the Arapium by incarcerating and rooting them to parcels of lands and freeing the rest of their territory for other purposes. As Dominique Gallois (2004) suggests, it is necessary to deconstruct the equivalence established between land and territory and work according to the diverse conceptions of territory that indigenous peoples have. Indigenous lands constitute primarily the legal and political process of definition of areas as indigenous land, while territory refers to the historical and cultural construction of spaces through process of interaction between people and their territorial base. For anthropologists participating in land demarcation processes this distinction is crucial for the definition of the areas to be delimited.

In chapter 5, I analyze the presence of the indigenous movement within global discourses and agendas for conservation and economic development of the Amazon region. The discussion of these issues calls attention to ethnic politics as a two-way strategy. That is, when we talk about the political use of an identity to gain rights, we cannot refer solely to the subject holding that identity, but to the external subjects that politically use the meaning of that identity to recognize or deny the rights entitled to it. At the national and international levels, indigenous rights movements have made gains to resist pressures on their lands and improve the living conditions of their people. Changes in national constitutions and norms related to land rights and political participation were obtained from the pressure exerted by indigenous movements and their allies. Worldwide indigenous movements today are better prepared, having gained important experience in negotiations and decision-making at different levels of governance

(Dávalos 2005). Many of the advances in the international recognition of indigenous rights have resulted from the linkages between transnational networks alliances and indigenous peoples (Ramos 1998; Brysk 2000).

However, support as well as threats comes from sympathetic international or national agents that contest indigenous land rights by claiming space for development and use of valuable natural resources located within indigenous territories (Stocks 2005). The ethno-political discourse that supports the struggle for recognition is used by one or another group to claim or contest indigenous rights. It is in this context, in which definitions of indigenusness enter to play a key role in the arguments in favor or against these claims. The discussion in this chapter illustrates the way NGOS, policymakers, and laypeople conceive of indigenous peoples as supporting or not their struggle for recognition and land rights. This is important since the conception of indigenusness in this context questions cultural change. The notion of change is used primarily to de-legitimize the claims of people of cultural and racial mixture. It means that the concept of change is understood as evidence of cultural vanishing and not as a form of survival or continuity.

In the situations described in this chapter, the notion of change becomes critical, particularly when it addresses the historical transformation of both the Indians and their Amazonian landscape, which continue to be conceived of as unrelated and static entities. Their values rely, on one hand, on how well indigenous people represent ancient cultures and, on the other, how much the current forest constitutes an unmodified primary forest. The application of the notion of change to them has been used to the detriment of their own value. While for indigenous people of cultural mixed descent, the notion of change questions their indigenusness, for the Amazonian landscape, change justifies the replacement of forest by

large-scale agricultural production and concentration of land tenure. Our role then, as anthropologists, is not only to provide better understanding of how indigenous people are conceptualized, but also to convey how change is integral to the constitution of what indigenous peoples are. This is particularly important when working with indigenous groups that have suffered a radical process of alteration and cultural mixture.

Ken Coates (2004) in this analysis of the contemporary situation of indigenous peoples stresses the importance of defining indigenous people by who they are and not solely by the visions of outsiders and state powers. He alleges that the idea that those who maintain ancient traditions, rituals, customs, speak their language, and depend on the land for subsistence are the ones who can be defined as indigenous people still persists. Those who have been moved out of their land by force or by choice, changed their life styles, speak the language of dominant society and integrate traditional and non-indigenous economic systems as a form of subsistence are considered as indigenous peoples in crisis, without identity or assimilated into the social mainstream. In the global perspective, the articulation of the localizing power of indigenous peoples' cultures and the homogenizing forces of globalization has produced a new set of contradictions that have become salient in the definition of identity. Hybridity and multiculturalism, for instance, represent new forms of the politics of recognizing difference based on ethnicity, nationality, and gender (Dávalos 2005; Friedman 2000).

Indigenous peoples from Oceania have claimed aboriginality as a common identity, which is partly defined by tradition and partly by the history of contact with colonial power and forced racial mixture. In a public expression of aboriginality, traditional aboriginal dancing and painting are presented next to new aboriginal talent in plastic arts, literature, theatre, and music. Aborigines who are close to their lands, language, and customs and those who have lost these

traditions self-identify with the multiple meanings of aboriginality (Wassmann 1998). In South Africa the case of Khoisan identity, a term coined in the 20th century and used to describe two related people, the pastoral Khoi and the hunting and gathering San, shows how this identity has been constructed and re-invented by these groups. The changing meanings of the Khoisan identity have raised intriguing questions of who is indigenous. The Khoisan people of urban or rural areas of South Africa are struggling to maintain and revive their distinctive ethnicity (Lee 2003). In the United States, the history of the native people of southeastern New England shows a process of disintegration during the 19th century and revitalization in the 20th century. McMullen (1994) argues that anthropologists and ethnohistorians have generally ignored the role of mixed communities, interactive regional networks, and the development of pan-Indian organizations as strategies of cultural survival. What has been written about the natives of New England focuses on cultural disintegration resulting from centuries of contact and forced acculturation. The author argues that emphasizing local rather than regional context and stressing visible aspects of culture has hampered understanding and leads to simplistic interpretation of indigenous peoples' cultural survival. The analysis shows how through the formation of a pan-Indian organization native people reacted to the dominant society, evoked race consciousness, and made use of pan-Indian symbols to gain local recognition.

Despite historical regional variations around the world, indigenous people share experiences that include economic and political domination, resistance to colonizer/outsider powers, participation with non-indigenous societies in the process of decolonization, and changing systems of values and cultures. The people of the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns region share features of struggle with the cases discussed above. One major aspect I want to recall here is the fact that the indigenous peoples from Oceania, South Africa, United States, and Brazil have gone

through a dramatic process of cultural change and miscegenation to revitalize their ethnic indigenous identities. In the global context, the case of the indigenous movement of the lower Tapajós-Arapiuns can add to understanding the diverse forms of indigenous peoples' cultural continuity and political mobilization. This form of political mobilization need to be taken into account in national and international legislation to secure the rights of those who have self-ascribed to this category.

Implications of the Study

In a critique on the extensive and unclear use of the term “identity” as an analytical category in social science and humanities, Brubaker and Cooper (2000) assert that the prevailing constructionist view of identity has both intellectual and political costs. Because in attempting to soften the charge of essentialism - by stipulating that identities are constructed, fluid, and multiple - constructionism does not leave us with an analytical base to examine the essentialist claims of contemporary identity politics. Identity has become a key and powerful term in governmental, vernacular, and intellectual contemporary discourses of ethno-politics. In this term, the authors see identity as a category of practice developed through everyday social experience and used by lay people to make sense of themselves, their activities, and the way they are different or similar to others. It is also a category used by politicians to persuade people to understand themselves in certain ways and to impose classificatory schemas of identification. However, as states' official definitional categories are symbolically imposed, social movements challenge officially ascribed identities by developing their own (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). While the attempt of the authors is to move beyond the term identity and to find a better and “unambiguous” conceptual category to analyze the way people make sense of themselves, I want to recall the political and intellectual implications of identity claims as they appear as essentialist.

Peter Wade (1997) points out that one of the features of contemporary social movements is that they have an essentialist view of their own cultures through which they intend to root their identities in history. Essentialist representation of ethnic identity has become a political statement with political effects. As the call by Brubaker and Cooper (2000), Wade asserts that too much attention to the idea of the constant re-invention and flexibility of culture becomes dangerously close to denying historical continuities if this feature of culture is analyzed outside of the same historical processes that generate change. Instead, we should concentrate on the basic concerns in which ethnic and racial identities are involved, such as the control of resources, power, autonomy and interdependency, and a sense of past and future. More important is to see how these concerns are culturally constituted in historical processes and in relation to differences of power. Then, it is important to understand that historical continuity is constituted through constant change and that the dimensions of difference are mutually influenced by power, economics, politics, and ethnicity (Wade 1997).

What all these debates tell us in terms of the politics of recognition is that the anthropological studies that constitute the basis of decisions about the legal allocation of land rights to indigenous people require considering the dynamic process of ethnic definition and the influence of internal and external forces. Anthropologists are considered the best qualified social scientists to clarify the many issues surrounding indigenous rights claims and to provide the arguments to secure those rights (Maybury-Lewis 2003; Rappaport 2005; Wade 1997).

Maybury-Lewis asserts that one of the key roles of the anthropologist is to educate the general public and policy-makers about indigenous peoples' changing cultures and to show that they are not archaic, but rather marginalized groups. This brings us back to the issue of the relationship between anthropology and the peoples it studies, and the work that anthropologists produce

about them. Johannes Fabian (1987) called for the dismantling of the spatiotemporal distance that has characterized the anthropological view of its object, which located the anthropologists as “here and now” and its object “there and then.” That was the classical monographic representation of the “primitive Other” as outside of history and as survival of a distant past. He asserts, “The relationship between anthropology and its object is inevitably political; the production of knowledge occurs in a public forum of intergroup, interclass, and international relations” (1987:143). With this, he means the active role that both the anthropologist and its object have in the production of knowledge. Yet, James Clifford asserts that a redefinition of our ethnographic practice as dialogue, that is, as a constructive negotiation, between anthropologists and their informants would permit us to see the people we study as conscious and politically significant subjects and to better represent the authority of the informant and the ethnographer as well (Clifford 1988). Moreover, some anthropologists have called for a more politically engaged anthropological practice in which long term collaboration and integration of diverse points of view can bring us closer to the people we study. Joanne Rappaport asserts that the fruits of collaborative ethnography are not represented solely in writing in the form of co-authorship, but mainly as a form of co-theorizing with the people with whom we do research (e.g. the indigenous intellectuals), which provides the discipline and its interlocutors with new tools to understand contemporary realities (2005).

Beyond the implications for the politics of ethnicity and land distribution that claims for legal recognition of indigenous peoples have, the practical implications of the re-construction of indigenous peoples’ own histories is an important issue for further research. This includes not only the exploration of indigenous peoples’ own ways of interpreting history, which have been developed by anthropologists, but also the re-location of the indigenous peoples as active agents

of history. The historical past of indigenous peoples is not something to be found and discovered out there; it has been created and represented. Collaborative efforts to re-construct the relationship between the past and indigenous people as participants in that history permit alternative visions of the past. In this sense, indigenous peoples become active subjects who are not only tied to what they were in the past, but to what they are in the present, and will become in the future. Collaborative efforts go beyond the relationship between anthropology and indigenous people; they require integration of perspectives of other disciplines through which the unique voice of alternative histories can be represented.

As anthropologists, we need to take into account that our ethnographic practice (fieldwork and writing) does not occur in a socio-political and historical vacuum and that these practices mediate the relationships we establish with the people involved in our research. Our practice does not lie in a pure academic realm; what we do and what we write have practical effects for the people we study. In our field research, we interact with individuals and groups who possess their own views and pursue their own interests; in other words, our objects are also active political agents. In the present case, the academic anthropological inquiry on indigenous identity claims intersect with the political implications that this search has for indigenous peoples' struggle for recognition. The anthropological production of knowledge in this matter involves us not merely with the task of creating ethnographic writings as a dialogue to give voice to the people being studied. Anthropological inquiry, in a case like this, immerses us within political and legal debates that seek the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights. Our relationship with indigenous people is then, situated as a political realm, through which dialogue between anthropology and its object becomes imperative to incorporate peoples' viewpoints into discussion and decision about their rights.

The steps that the indigenous movement has achieved to initiate the process of land demarcation, has also placed this study as a reference for legal scrutiny to define their recognition and land rights. Since the very beginning of my fieldwork, the product of my research was envisioned by the Arapium and Jaraqui people as a key element in support of their claims. This was not an unusual circumstance; it was the product of a fieldwork dialogue with active and sensitive political agents who wanted to re-construct their own version of their history and were engaged in political struggle to gain the rights entitled by their identity as indigenous people. While writing the final pages of this dissertation, I have been interviewed by the anthropologist consultant of FUNAI in charge of the development of the land delimitation studies that would define the land tenure rights of these indigenous groups. This study constitutes, at this point, the only available written material that presents information about the claims and meaning of being Arapium and Jaraqui Indians. I only hope that I can accurately contribute to this collective effort. It is of equal importance for me that this study sheds light through anthropological inquiry on the construction of ethnic identity and the changing notion of indigenusness.



Figure 6-1. Indigenous Pastos explaining their conception of territory



Figure 6-2. Group of participants of the land struggle exchange in the community of Caruci

APPENDIX A
PROCESS OF GROUNDED THEORY

Initial Coding

Question. fale um pouco da sua participação no conselho indígena eo movimento da luta pela terra?

2JI: A luta pela terra está sendo **muito contínua [historical land struggle]**, porque desde o momento que eu pude **conhecer** os nossos **direitos como índios [acquiring knowledge of indigenous rights]**, nós temos lutado bastante. Já vai pra os três anos, e agente ainda não conseguiu. Só que antes de nós termos a nossa identificação como povo indígena, outras aldeias já tinham dado o primeiro passo [**self-definition**] pra a demarcação chegar nas **nossas terras indígenas**. Com o Caruci e Garimpo são umas 10 aldeias primeiro do que a gente que se **assumiram [self-definition]** e mesmo porque nós não tínhamos o **conhecimento [Restrictive knowledge]**, porque índio já era desde o nosso nascimento. Nossos pais, nossos avós **eram índios [Recognizing Indian descent]**. E nós por não termos o **conhecimento** ainda estavam seguindo como pessoas [restrictive knowledge] brancas, mas agora sabemos que **somos verdadeiramente índios [feeling as true Indians]**. Então estamos lutando, e até agora não conseguimos a demarcação das terras, das nossas terras indígenas [**Struggling for land demarcation**].

Analytical Memo

August 16, 2007

2JI Indigenous Jaraqui community Lago da Praia

(Paragraph# 1 page 7) answer to question: fale da sua participação no conselho indígena eo movimento de luta pela terra¹

¹ These memos constitute the first drafts of the analysis of the data that emerged from the interviews. Katy Charmaz suggests that one should write this first draft without paying too much attention to grammar or style in order to be able to capture the initial ideas (2006).

This first paragraph is very dense in the sense that it shows many deep concepts that intersect in different ways. **Land struggle** and **participation in the indigenous movement** in this narrative are related to a “**historical process of social struggle**”, which therefore brings about issues of “**social exclusion**”. These issues are also related to the concept of knowledge that appears repeatedly during the interview. This makes me think that the fact of having or not having knowledge of their Indian history, being able or not to accessing information, or just having certain type of “knowledge,” such as the official history, contributed to exclude the Arapium from their own history. This idea is very clear in his statement “*porque desde o momento que eu pude **conhecer** os nossos **direitos como índios** nós temos lutado bastante.*” This is where the concept of “knowledge” started having a major big role in the way past and current situations are explained. But, is knowledge enough for people to acquire consciousness about their condition and to decide to start a struggle for rights? Or what exactly is knowledge referring to here? This concept is also clearly tied to “indigenous rights” in having knowledge about or “discovering” the existence of rights for indigenous people and being able to use them. Knowledge again plays an important role in the explanation of their self-definition as indigenous people. It is as if they were denied the knowledge of being Indians. That is, official conceptions of peoples’ culture and identity made them think and believe that they were not Indians. That is, an ascribed identity that hid the knowledge/true of what they were. In that sense, conception of ancestry gives a sense of being “true Indians,” which at the same time provides a basis for their claim for land rights.

September 20, 2007

While reading the same paragraph and having considered the whole interview, I noticed that the concept of **knowledge** has two dimensions: one related to what I expressed before, “a

hidden knowledge”, that now I am conceiving of as “**restrictive knowledge**”, the way historical conditions have shaped our understanding of what we are. The other is the process of “**acquiring knowledge**” or revealing facts, other ways of understanding, and conceptions of our own reality, perhaps being aware about the possibility of re-creating their own conception of what they are as Indians. This is an example “...*Com o Caruci e Garimpo são umas 10 aldeias primeiro do que a gente que se **assumiram**; e mesmo porque nós **não** tinhamos o **conhecimento**, porque índio já era desde o nosso nascimento. Nossos pais, nossos avós **eram índios**. E nós por não termos o **conhecimento** ainda **estavamos seguindo** como pessoas brancas, mas agora sabemos que **somos verdadeiramente índios**.”*

Within this paragraph, another concept emerged, which is the idea of **Indian descent**. This idea is expressed here in terms of its relation to the broader concept of “**historical process of social struggle**” when the informant continues saying “*Então estamos lutando, e até agora não conseguimos a demarcação das terras, das nossas terras indígenas.*” This relationship needs to be interpreted very carefully to avoid simplistic interpretations of linear causality, as in interpretations like, “because these people want/need to secure their land; they are re-creating a sense of indigenusness.” The concept of **Indian descent** is also related to **restrictive knowledge and acquiring knowledge**. Taking all these concepts into account, it becomes possible to elaborate a more complex explanation of the historical condition that helps to construct the Arapium/Jaraqui indigenous identities in the present.

Memo Focus Coding: Feeling attached to land

Feeling attached to land means that the fundamental relationships that people have established with the land through generations nurture their sense of indigenusness. A fundamental aspect of this is the sense of rootedness created in the relationship between the place of origin and people’s identity. Place of origin indicates not only the locality of birth but also the

region where this locality belongs. That is, an individual is a “son of the land” not only because the person was born in the particular community, but also in its surroundings. It is the region or geographical area where a person has established a routine of work, social/family interaction, resides, and in general makes a living. Attachment to land indicates that if a person was born, raised, and has resided for many years in a place, then that person has developed feelings of security and belonging to that land, that is like home and from which they do not want to leave. Then, land as a place to which a person belongs is of critical importance for the meaning of one’s identity. Since the land where people reside is considered Indian land, so their identity is built upon and reinforced with the notion of indigenusness.

Memo Theoretical Coding: Historical Continuity

This term brings a critical conception in the definition of what and who is indigenous. I say critical, because of the traditional primitivist conception and sense of fixity regarding indigenous people. I mean, for this traditional conception, indigenous people are to be genuine representatives of a distant and unchanged past. Evidence of cultural change has condemned many to non-recognition as indigenous people or as the experience of the movement of the resistant Indian in Brazil to long and enduring struggles for rights. How then, is it possible to talk about “historical continuity” in the case of an indigenous group that has gone through several processes of cultural change and mixture? How do people conceive this historical continuity? From the context and narratives of the interviews, **historical continuity** is expressed through the “acknowledging of Indian descent,” “recognizing Indian origin” which mean to be of **Indian descent**. The former indicates descent and belonging to an Indian family; the second as having an Indian origin though unable give a certain indication of who in the family transmitted the Indian line. **Experiencing Indian culture** is another property of this theoretical concept that means that the person by a process of personal and transmitted knowledge has experienced or

lived according to Indian culture. The person interprets his/her way of life as pertaining to indigenous world. Peoples' continuity in history is also interpreted as a form of resistant. That is, being a **resistant Indian**, a person who has maintained in the very inside of his mind, his/her indigenous identity. Resistant people have the strength to accommodate to new conditions without losing their identities. Envisioning themselves as an embodiment of indigenous historical continuity, people get a sense of authenticity. In other words, they are authentic because although they have suffered all of the many projects of extinction and assimilation, but they continue to exist as indigenous people.

Table A-1. Example of the spreadsheet showing the different steps of coding

| Code # | Answer | Initial coding | Focused coding | Theoretical concept |
|-------------|--|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| C0402-18EM | E o povo Arapium devido a nossa região...porque sabe se que aqui nesta região do Caruci quanto do outro lado tinha muito índios Arapium | Relating area as Arapium land | Place of origin | Sense of rootedness |
| C0102-4AD | Como um povo indígena, pra mim que sou índia, ela [terra] é muito importante, nela nós cultivamos tudo que nós precisamos e dela também nós tiramos tudo que ela tem da natureza principalmente madeiras, remedios medicinais, que é uma riqueza aqui... | depending on land for subsistence | Subsistence | Sense of rootedness |
| A0003-45 AS | Nós fuimos reconhecer a nossa origin , nós sentimos que somos índios mesmos, somos Arapium. | Asserting being real Arapium Indian | Authenticity | Historical memory |
| L1901-38JB | porque somos indios é por causa da nossa origem, da nossa descendência, né; e por causa tambem de nossa identificação. | recognizing Indian origin | Indian descent | Historical memory |
| C0402-18EM | Nos tambem somos considerados tapuios, os verdadeiro tapuios da região amazonica. Tapuio o seja o índio ja mixturado com o negro, branco e com outros indios. | Recognizing Indian mixture | Racial-cultural mixture | Historical transformation |
| GIS6 | nós perderamos toda a nossa cultura nós perderamos toda a nossa religião, o nosso jeito de nós fazer nosso remedio casero, o jeito de nós dezir que o nosso pajé não tem valor, a curandera não tem valor, a partera não tem valor, só o hospital, só o dotor, só isso, só tudo o que é de branco é que tem valor... | Losing culture | Enforced assimilation | Historical transformation |
| S0001-49AF | Eu estava com 14 anos na epoca, foi que eu comecei assumir a minha identidade a buscar assim informacoes, ter consciencia indigena | Deciding consciously | Rising consciousness | Consciousness |
| L1501-2IJ | Eu acho que muitas pessoas se sintem invergonhadas, pensam que índio é um bicho de sete cabeças | Feeling ashamed of being Indian | Indian stigma | Social exclusion |
| L2004-23SL | eles vinham quasi todo mes estavam ai repassando, porque no começo poucas pessoas entenderam, depois foram pedidos para retornarem, e eles vieram e tomaram a explicar de novo e foi encaxando mas na cabeça deles. | Receiving explanation from CITA | Indigenous movement influence | Identity politics |
| L1512-9EB | A ideia de fazer a reserva extrativista ja veio. Era o INCRA passou por aqui mas ninguem aceitou, porque quando passou por aqui a gente já tinha se assumido como indígena, já era aldeia. | Receiving offer to create extractive reserve | Land struggle | Identity politics |

APPENDIX B MANIFESTO CITA

Version in Portuguese

A Amazônia que temos é fruto do modelo de desenvolvimento alheio aos interesses do povo da região. A Floresta, a água e as terras amazônicas estão submetidas a um sangue nacional a serviço do lucro particular e do capital internacional. Este sangue sendo qualificado pelos governantes como desenvolvimento. A zona Franca, a soja e o boi não trazem, a médio e longo prazo, nenhum benefício para a Amazônia. Qualquer projeto que envolve as populações da Amazônia.

O problema é o modo como a gente entende hoje, o que significa progresso. Esse sistema neoliberal que criou o agronegócio, não faz sentido aqui no solo da Amazônia, assim como qualquer outro tipo de desenvolvimento que vise só a exportação. O atual governo também visa unicamente a exportação e esse é o maior problema, nós como movimento indígena e outros movimentos sociais, temos outra maneira de pensar o que é a terra para nós, o crescimento econômico não pode ser o objetivo primeiro e último de uma política econômica. A qualidade de vida das pessoas e a preservação ambiental deve vir na frente.

A terra não pode ser considerada terra de negócio no sentido de compra e venda a terra para nós indígena é terra de convivência, fidelidade, amor, nossa mãe, terra é o chão de nossos mitos, ritos e costumes. O Agronegocio quer aproveitar a terra como negócio, como renda, mas nós entendemos o contrario, a terra é o lugar onde todo mundo tem vez e voz. A ONU criou o conceito de desenvolvimento humano medido por três critérios: proporcionar as pessoas uma vida longa e saudável, adquirir conhecimento, obter recursos necessários para um padrão de vida decente. O desenvolvimento não visa só o meio ambiente sustentável, mas visa em primeiro lugar a qualidade de vida humana. As pessoas são a verdadeira riqueza do mundo.

Não podemos e nem devemos aceitar passivamente um desenvolvimento que destrói a nossa natureza e castiga as nossas vidas. Os desenvolvimentos que temos na Amazônia são as pragas que tiram as nossas riquezas, e também tiram as vidas dos cristãos, fora desmatamento e grilagem das nossas terras, isso não lhe pertence mais.

A terra é nossa, fora sujeiros!

Miguel Brass, CITA
Maio 1, 2006

Version in English (My Own Translation)

The Amazon region we have now is the product of a development model foreign to the interest of the people of the region. The forest, the water, and the land have been subservient to the private interests of international capital. The government has defined this model as development. The soybean cultivation and cattle raising has no short or long-term benefits to the region or the people who inhabit it.

The major problem today is how people understand or define progress. The neoliberal system that supports the agro-business and large-scale export is not in the best interest of the Amazon region. The current government places high importance to the export agribusiness and we see this as a critical problem. We as indigenous peoples as well as other social movements have a different view of the land. The economic growth cannot be the sole objective of the national economy. Quality of life and conservation of the environment must be the top priority. The land cannot be considered as a mere commodity or a thing that can be bought and sold. For us, land means kinship, mother, and stand at the heart of our myths, rituals, and culture.

The agro-business wants to take advantage of the land for profit, but we see it differently. The land is a place in which we and everybody else has a voice. The ONU conceived a definition of human development based on three criteria: to provide people with long and healthy

life, to acquire knowledge, to obtain the necessary resources for a dignified life. Our concept of development does not contemplate only the protection of the environment, but give priority to human quality of life. People are the true wealth of the world.

We cannot and will not passively accept a development paradigm that will ultimately destroy our nature and thus our lives. We see the current development model of the Amazon region as a plague that destroys not only the richness of our lands, but also the lives of our people. We have enough deforestation, displacement, and land rights violations.

The land is ours! Out with the soybean producer!

Miguel Brass, CITA
May 1, 2006

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Omaira Bolaños Cárdenas was born in Cartago, in the state of Valle del Cauca, Colombia, and moved early in her childhood to Cali where she did her undergraduate studies at the University of Valle. In 1989, she obtained a bachelor's degree in Social Work. Before finishing her degree, she started working in community-based conservation programs with governmental organizations and private institutions throughout the region of the Valle del Cauca state. The work that she developed during 10 years with peasants and indigenous groups of the region led to the formation of grassroots organizations, which became key political actors in environmental decision-making at the local governmental level. In 1999 as the internal armed conflict of Colombia intensified in the south region of Valle del Cauca where she was working, she was forced to leave the country and moved to the United States of America.

In 2000, Omaira started a master's degree at the Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida with a concentration in tropical conservation and development and graduated in May 2003. She developed her master's research in Bolivia in community forestry in the indigenous territory of the Guarayo Indians. In the fall of 2003, she started the Ph.D. program of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Florida. Based on her previous experience facing issues of ethnicity, she decided to concentrate studies on this area of knowledge. Keeping her Latin Americanist perspective, she developed her doctoral research in the Amazon Brazil. She developed research on the claims of indigenous identity and land rights by people of mixed descent in the municipality of Santarém, Brazil with the indigenous Arapiú and Jaraquí.